

MAY, 1958

JULIA FARRON'S CAREER

# Ballet

TODAY

1/6<sup>D</sup>



RAY POWELL AND JULIA FARRON IN THE PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS





John Gilpin and Anita Landa in *The Witch Boy* premiered in April when London Festival Ballet commenced their tour at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre during the Paris Festival of the Theatre des Nations. The Company will return to Paris on the 7th and 8th July for two performances of *The Nutcracker*, having by that time almost completed their most extensive tour yet, which will have taken them through France, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany and Italy.

Photo: Mike Davis.

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## Cover Portrait:

Julia Farron as Princess Belle Epine  
(the wicked sister, favourite daughter  
of the Emperor)

and

Ray Powell, as the dwarf  
(a flattering servant)

in

THE PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS

Photo: Tony Armstrong Jones

# Ballet TODAY

Established 1946

A MONTHLY REVIEW  
DEVOTED TO DANCE  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

EDITOR: ESTELLE HERF

No. 4

Vol. 11

Our next issue will be published on 28th May, 1958.





## BACKSTAGE

### QUITE A DAY

**O**UR photograph shows Alicia Markova outside Buckingham Palace after being invested with the C.B.E. by Her Majesty the Queen.

A family lunch party had been planned after the investiture, but a rehearsal had been called at Drury Lane, where the ballerina was dancing with the Italian Opera Company. Immediately after the rehearsal Markova left for the television studio to appear in their programme *Tonight*. The family finally got together at a dinner party at 7.30 and Alicia was able to cut a cake inscribed "Alicia Markova, C.B.E." which had been planned as part of the surprise party, arranged by her three sisters, also seen in this photograph (left to right) Mrs. Doris Barry, Vivienne Marks, Alicia Markova, and Mrs. Victor Kentner.

I asked Doris Barry what was her most vivid impression of the visit to the Palace. "Alicia's beautiful curtsy to the Queen," she said.

Only a week or so before Markova had been honoured by an invitation to attend a private luncheon party given by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace.

### NEW T.V. SERIES ON DANCE

During the Summer Term Associated-Rediffusion's television programmes for schools will include a series of nine programmes on dance and mime, beginning 2nd May, devised and scripted by Fernau Hall and directed by Geoff Rimmer. The series is intended to help children towards an understanding and appreciation of many types of dance and mime, and in the development of the creative work which is already going on. Some programmes will show work by children in schools, whilst others will bring to the screen the work of outstanding professional artists. Fernau Hall is well known to readers of *Ballet Today*, for several years he has contributed articles and reports in our *Young Dancers* feature, and with our April issue became one of the regular reviewers on our London Ballet Month pages.

### CULTURAL EXCHANGES

The Ministry of Culture of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will invite the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra to visit the Soviet Union in May, or June, 1958 and will send the Ballet Troupe of the Bolshoi Theatre of the Soviet Union, numbering 110-120 persons, to the United States in 1959 for a period of one month.

### NEW ARRIVAL

Belinda Wright, ballerina of London's Festival Ballet gave birth to a son in Westminster Hospital, London, on the 14th March. Miss Wright is married to dancer-choreographer Wolfgang Brunner, and this is their first child.

### OLEG BRIANSKY

Yet another star dancer is to return to Festival Ballet during the present foreign tour. Oleg Briansky (whose story we told in the March issue of *Ballet Today*) makes his first appearance in Paris at the end of April.

### JOHN BROOME DANCE THEATRE

A small modern-dance company has recently been formed under the auspices of the Related Arts Centre and are to present a programme of entirely new works on 25th, 26th and 27th April at 8 p.m. at the Park Lane Theatre. Included in the programme will be *Im Fruhling* a lyrical suite of dances to the music of Franz Schubert; *Clown*, a story of love, ambition and suicide of a circus clown, the score of which has been specially written by Yvonne Cox, and *Mal de Mer*, a humorous ballet set in the times of Nelson, with music drawn from the works of Purcell, Handel, Telemann and Pergolesi.

### IN BRIEF

Nestor Mondino, soloist of the Munich Opera Ballet, is now under contract with Orlikowsky in Basel as first dancer.

Svetlana Beriosova will dance in *Sleeping Beauty* in Stuttgart on 13th and 15th May. The Bolshoi Ballet is to appear in Munich in May.



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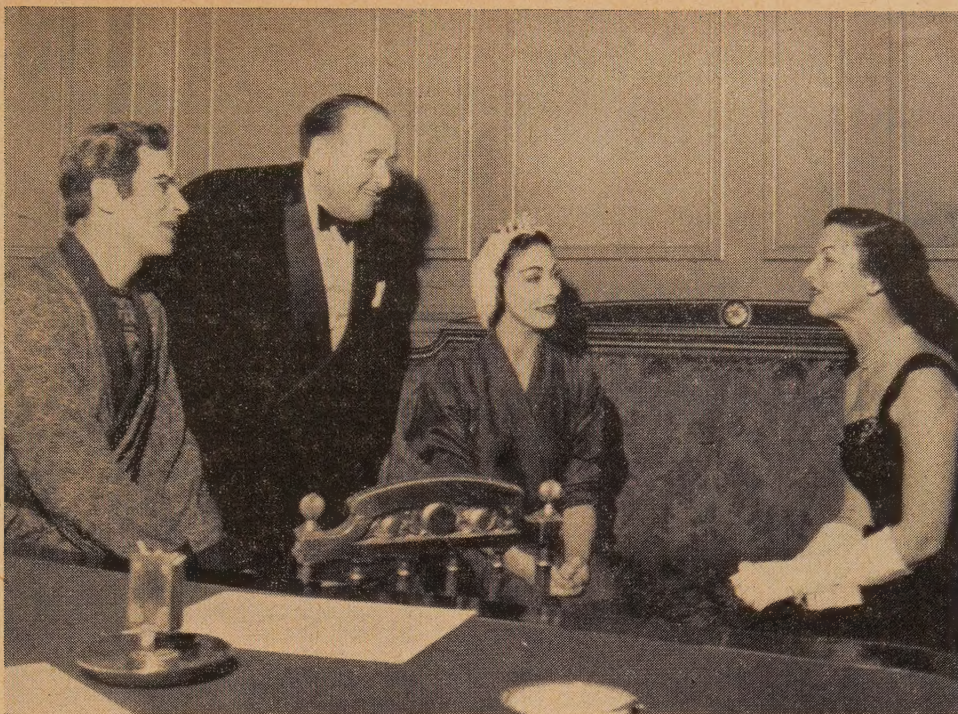
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Left to right: Michael Some, Dr. Julian Braunschw, Margot Fonteyn and Princess Antoinette of Monaco in Monte Carlo.

Photo: Robert Oggero.

## THE SEVEN LEAN YEARS

IT must be the most difficult thing in the world to launch a new Company, determine its aims and to hold on to one's own beliefs. Young and promising dancers must be encouraged but if classical ballet is in the repertoire their performances are bound to be unfavourably compared with those of the great ballerinas past and present. If experiments are made with contemporary works it quite often happens that in their efforts to bring ballet "up to date" the angry young men of our day create something either very sordid, or so high-brow that the ordinary man-in-the-street goes away with the idea that ballet is some sort of mystic rite in which he for one will never be able to participate, and in any case why should he take the trouble to find out what it is all about . . . he went to the theatre to be entertained.

Dr. Julian Braunschw, Director-General of Festival Ballet since its inception in 1949, is a man of simple beliefs, and one of them is that when people enter a theatre they want, for a while, to indulge in a little make-belief, to enter a world where all the characters re-act according to their own secret hopes and yearnings.

One can only suppose that when Festival Ballet first commenced, this successful and hard-headed business man regarded it as another commercial venture in his long life as an impresario. It soon became obvious however that he would have to carry a heavy burden, for it is no secret that after a year or two the Company ran into serious financial difficulties. What was it that made this experienced man of the theatre so fanatically determined to keep on at all costs, and to build up this Company without the aid of a subsidy, or any outside financial backing?

He believed that he knew what people wanted, and he was determined to keep the Company's head above water until he could prove it. "But" says Dr. Braunschw "a ballet company can only be built stone upon stone" and he should know for he has, in his time, built up German, Russian, Spanish and Indian Companies.

The process of building Festival Ballet began in 1949 when Julian Braunschw arranged with Anton Dolin and Alicia Markova to tour the provinces doing three or four shows a week. They caused a great

deal of interest and when offers began to come in it was found necessary to add more boys and girls as the repertoire grew. They had their setbacks, Alicia Markova their star became ill when they were playing the Opera House, Manchester, and had to go into hospital for an operation. Violetta Elvin stepped into the breach for one week, but they had to finish the tour without Markova.

Krassovska joined the Company, and they put on *Petrushka* and *Beau Danube*. By that time the Company had increased to about 30 or 40 members. Markova rejoined them, and it was at her suggestion that the Company was named "Festival Ballet."

Their first London season was at the Stoll Theatre from October, 1950 to January, 1951. Then came a season at Monte Carlo, their first appearance abroad; a return to the Stoll Theatre where they presented *Prince Igor*; more tours of the provinces, and the next spring they toured Barcelona, Lisbon, Paris, Italy and later America.

Although box-office receipts were good, the cost of new productions and replacements were very costly, and it must have taken a great deal of courage not only to continue financing the Company, but to gradually build it up and add to its repertoire. These were truly the seven lean years as far as Dr. Braunschw was concerned, and one can only be filled with admiration for this man, small in stature, but with the heart of a lion. Not for him the glamour of the footlights, he is not a seeker after self-publicity, not for him the rôle of the prosperous impresario taking the lion's share of the receipts. He was the one who received the bills—and had to do something about them. He will tell you that his strength has always lain in the fact that he can make his own decisions and that he has no need to consult boards of directors, but it is obvious when talking to him that it is his singleness of purpose and love of ballet which has carried him over the difficult times and enabled him to carry this enormous burden.

He was born in Warsaw, and in 1914, when a young boy, he lived in Moscow and went to school there. His parents took a flat which had been occupied by Fisher, a photographer with the Imperial Theatre. As the flat had been left hurriedly by its previous occupant there were certain belongings left behind, amongst them some negatives

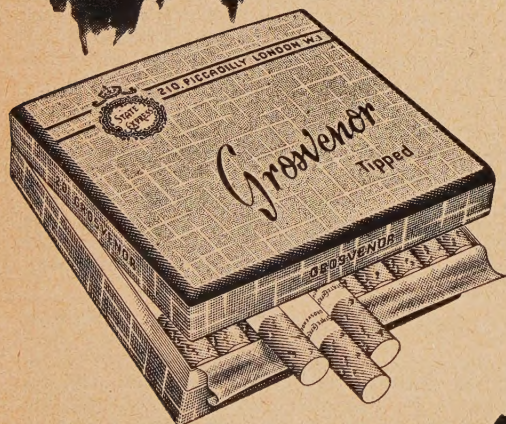


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## THE SEVEN LEAN YEARS—Continued

of the artists at the Theatre. Young Braunschweig developed many prints and gave them to the artists, and in return they befriended him. When seats were difficult to obtain there was always a place either out front or backstage for young Julian, and here he saw *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and many other ballets produced on a grandiose scale. The memory of these lavish productions has remained with him throughout his life, and one can understand why even in the most difficult times in his own Company he would not economise if it meant spoiling the ballet then being produced.

He completed his education in Berlin, taking a Doctorate in Economics, and started in production with Max Reinhardt. The *Green Flute* was one of the earliest ventures, and together they built up a German ballet Company. In 1924 Dr. Braunschweig brought the Russian Romantic Ballet Company to the London Coliseum. To tell all he has accomplished in his 40 years as an impresario one would have to write a book, but at one time or another he has been connected with most of the famous ballerinas including Tilly Losch (the Countess of Caernarvon) and the inimitable Pavlova. Of Pavlova he says "not only was she a genius of the dance, but her wonderful personality is something one would never forget." He was responsible for arranging her last tour.

"Ballet," says Dr. Braunschweig, "should be served to people in the way one would give care and thought to a good meal. First should come the hors-d'oeuvre, then the pièce de resistance and finally the dessert. You do not give the steak at the end of the meal, the need to digest comes in the middle." He believes in sending his audiences home satisfied but gay. That is why so many of his programmes end with something frivolous or with a display of virtuosity and not on a depressing note. He deplores the cult of ugliness; he likes his music to have a melody. His knowledge of people is prodigious. He speaks five languages—Russian, Polish, German, French and English.

"English audiences," he says, "are very slow to take new ballets to their hearts. *Etudes*, which is now one of the favourites with audiences, took several years to catch on."

Last Christmas the Company put on *The Nutcracker* which was a smash hit, the Festival Hall was packed throughout the three-week season, and thousands of people had to be turned away. Every day hundreds of people called or telephoned the box office hoping to get returned tickets. Dr. Braunschweig believed that people in the Christmas mood would like to see this enchanting ballet, and he was right, for one had only to look around to know that the gasp of admiration went up from adults, as well as children, when John Gilpin and little Clara stood amongst the giant Christmas trees laden with snow, creating an impression of such beauty that the audience temporarily forgot the outside world with its news of Sputniks and threat of even larger and more destructive missiles.

This particular season, and the sensationally successful foreign tour which preceded it, could well be the turning point in the Company's history. It is a further good omen that Alicia Markova, who left the Company in 1952, has now agreed to return for the present foreign tour and the London season which follows. There is no doubt that many thousands of her admirers will welcome the opportunity to see her dancing in London throughout the summer.

Dr. Braunschweig has high hopes for *Witch Boy*, the ballet which was seen in Manchester, and given its world première in Paris last month. London will see it in the Company's London season commencing July. "This ballet," he says, "keeps you on the edge of your seat until the last moment, and provides wonderful acting roles for John Gilpin and Anita Landa who star in it."

Festival Ballet will return to London again this year for another Christmas season at Festival Hall. I know that friends and admirers from every part of the world who have grown to love and admire this delightful Company will wish them well on their tour and join me in saying, "Well done Dr. Braunschweig, we hope the next seven years will be filled with plenty."

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# New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

## THE WITCH

It is not surprising that Cranko set his ballet to Ravel's *Piano-Concerto in G*. It has a fascination which becomes deep rooted, particularly if the introductory performance approaches the standard of Michelangeli's on HMV, ALP1538. There are some extremely good records this month and this is one of the most brilliant. This concerto and Rachmaninov's Fourth on the reverse side, is sensitively accompanied by the Philharmonia under Gracis, making this a truly outstanding disc.

## LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

Ansermet's long and friendly association with Stravinsky, has given him an authority in performance that never fails. His latest recording on Decca LXT5388, may not be as dynamic as Markevitch's on HMV, CLP1003 but all the subtleties of the score are brought home to one. To me this is a fine interpretation but the choice must rest with you. The clarity of the recording is quite wonderful.

## PASTORALE

Of all Cranko's one-act ballets, this and *Pineapple Poll* have no serious adversaries. I find I am completely captivated by the spontaneity of his wit and charm, and when it was aided and abetted by Fifield's infectious gaiety, the result was irresistible. Beecham's recording, HMV, ALP1536 of the music used by Cranko, Mozart's *Divertimento No. 2*, is superb—the delicacy and understanding is second to none. Surely Mozart would have been delighted! And with the *Jupiter Symphony* as coupling, it is a record to be treasured.

## PAS DE TROIS ROYAL

The music of this ballet was taken by Yves Brioux from the *Haydn Variations* of Brahms, and also by Alicia Alonso for her first ballet, *Ensayo Sinfonico*, which give us the balletic interest to Decca LXT5394. This disc includes the *Tragic* and the *Academic Festival Overtures* as well as the *Alto Rhapsody* with the fine contralto, Lucretia West, as soloist and therefore this might be a disc of real interest to you. Knappertsbusch conducts the Vienna P.O. and his interpretations, without being exceptional, are thoroughly satisfying. Recording very good.

## ROSAMUNDE—BALLET MUSIC

This record of Schmidt-Isserstedt conducting the Hamburg Radio Orchestra, Parlophone PMC1048, will give a lot of pleasure. Besides the two ballets in B minor and G major, the first and third Entr'acte music, there is a beautiful rendering of Schubert's *Fifth Symphony*. In no way startling but an excellently recorded performance that surpasses all those I have heard. The enjoyment comes from a straightforward simplicity of interpretation and the love the conductor has for the music.

## BOGATYRI and FIREBIRD SUITE

This is an attractive pair as Massine choreographed part of Borodin's *Second Symphony* for his ballet, *Bogatyri*, of which there are already two or three really good performances. Dorati with the Minneapolis S.O., Mercury MRL2550, gives a sound rendering of both works, which together with this company's typically bright recording, brings out the colouring of this very Russian music. I must, however, remind you of Ansermet's complete *Firebird*.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

I have really enjoyed this first class recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's music, new to the LP repertoire except the *Flight of the Bumble Bee* which here comes up as fresh as a daisy. The suite from his opera, *Christmas Eve*, includes the enchanting ballet of the Shooting Stars, invested with all the magic of fairyland. His Musical Picture, *Sadko*, is the basis of his opera of the same name and finally his "revolutionary song," *Dubynushka*, completes another of Ansermet's winners, Decca LXT5398.

## GALA PERFORMANCE

The music of the rehearsal scene of Tudor's popular ballet was taken from Prokofiev's *Third Piano Concerto* and H.M.V. have issued a most interesting disc, COLH34. As a re-issue of their 1932 recording with the composer as soloist and including several of his piano pieces, it is of immense value to the student, for Prokofiev was a great executant. Considering its age, the recording is very good, though naturally not so clear as many in this series, Great Recordings of the Century, and therefore some of my readers may prefer the excellent disc with Julius Katchen, Decca LXT2894.

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Robert Helpmann in *The Rake's Progress*.

**A**FTER Helpmann's remarkable Rake, I looked forward with some misgivings to his Dr. Coppelius. His performance in the latter rôle always used to distress me, for it was unpleasant to see such a fine artist indulging in "ham" acting, with humour that was laboriously unfunny; what is worse, he used to draw attention to himself during Swanilda's dances in Act II, thus ruining any effect the dances might have. But his first performance as Dr. Coppelius showed him to have utterly reformed his previous excesses; his was a striking and outrageously caricatured Coppelius, but it never transgressed the laws of the theatre, and was attuned to the dramatic situation at each moment. He has invented a wonderful doddering walk which makes him look as if he were on wheels: this is in the great clown tradition preserved by Charlie Chaplin and is wonderfully suited to this comedy ballet. In comedy, timing is all-important, and Helpmann's sense of timing is now almost flawless; witness his perfectly timed start of surprise on taking a sniff at the bottle of drink.

The production, by Ninette de Valois, has fine bold lines, and goes with a swing; but many members of the corps de ballet (both female and male) disgrace themselves by gazing in front of them, obviously bored, when they should be taking part in the action. A shining exception is Deirdre Dixon; she acted the part of a comic peasant girl with such gusto in Act I that the rest of the crowd looked like stuffed dummies. Deirdre Dixon also danced splendidly in the betrothal Dance in Act III; it is high time her remarkable talents were used to more advantage.

For some reason *Coppelia* (which normally fills an evening) was preceded by *Scènes de Ballet*. I see no advantage in this, particularly since Ashton's rather wooden choreography in this ballet displays all Rowena Jackson's faults of style with cruel clarity.

FERNAU HALL.

### TENTH GALA PERFORMANCE

The Royal Ballet's Tenth Gala Performance took place on 24th March in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen Mother and H.R.H. Princess Margaret. In an effort to give a varied programme the company presented a mixed bag which entirely defeated its own purpose.

The programme notes describe Kenneth Macmillan's *Solitaire* as "a kind of game for one . . ." in this case it was Anya Linden. Only time will provide the answer as to whether, as the popular press have

## LONDON

so arbitrarily decided, she will take Fonteyn's place (and let us remember that there could have been very few people who imagined, until Alicia Markova left Sadler's Wells, that a teenager called Peggy Hookham was going to step forward to become eventually the prima ballerina assoluta—Margot Fonteyn) but it does seem that the recent American tour has given Miss Linden something that was missing before she went.

There is still, however, a certain amount of inconsistency in her work. The very same evening she appeared as Ophelia in Robert Helpmann's *Hamlet*. She attacked this rôle as if it were a matter of life and death and it happened to be the latter for she killed it stone dead by her very approach.

Ray Powell as the Gravedigger showed his really remarkable dramatic ability. He is one of those who have proved to us of late that the demi-caractère rôle is far from being a mere second best outlet for a dancer.

Of *La Péri* what can I say that has not been said already? Suffice it to say that this ballet has nearly everything. In the years to come I shall chiefly remember Michael Somes in this work; for this is the one ballet which is as much his as Margot Fonteyn's.

I confess a very definite prejudice against *Divertissements*. To me they seem just about as innocuous as the isolated dialogues from Shakespeare, to which everyone from school concert organisers to the B.B.C. seem at present addicted. They have neither beginning, end, nor logical sequence. Moreover, they savoured in this case of the "star" treatment which I old-fashionedly believe is out of place in ballet even to-day. Four pas de deux and one solo gave the evening the air of a glorified concert.

But what has happened to Svetlana Beriosova? Her gradual progress as a ballerina has in previous seasons given us some of the most rewarding evenings. One has come to take it for granted that every step she takes will be a step forward. Yet since her return from America I have detected something almost static. Was she over-worked on her American tour? It could be. Whatever it is I hope I shall be able to look back over the season without feeling I have been vaguely let down for I cannot believe that the present state of affairs is anything more than temporary.

I have far more criticism to level against the front of the house than on stage. Except for some slight decoration of the Royal Box and the programme sellers being more attractively dressed than usual, the auditorium might have passed for a matinée, among the ladies in the audience quite unpretentious cocktail dresses were largely the order of the day, and those few who sought to do the occasion full justice with "tails" and "ribbons" were no less conspicuous than the somewhat larger percentage who stood out a mile in lounge suits. I feel it is a pity that such a large section of the public do not seem to think a visit to the ballet worth any special attention to their general appearance. Such attire would be unacceptable at a film première and for the ballet it is just not good enough.

DAVID BENN.

### THE SHADOW (16th April)

It is hard to understand the Covent Garden management's devotion to *The Shadow*. Cranko's choreography is to a large extent padding of the dull sort—clichés strung together with only a vague association with the music—and the ballet's only raison d'être is the opportunity it gives Beriosova of deploying her cool lyricism. But even Beriosova cannot grip an audience for long, because of the way her rôle fades away each time it starts to build up; as one inexperienced but sensible spectator remarks, "Wot's the matter with 'er? Every time she comes on 'e carts 'er off." I have every sympathy with those spectators who sit this ballet out in the bars.

Catherine Boulton had a very difficult task when she took over Beriosova's rôle on 16th April. So far as I know she has only danced it once before at Covent Garden, and it is a big jump from the corps de ballet to a title rôle. Under the circumstances she did very well: though she lacks the marvellous lyricism of Beriosova's Russian arm movements, and cannot suggest mysterious depths of symbolism with such easy mastery, she has good line and moves her long limbs freely: the supple carriage of her shoulders is particularly refreshing.

What girl can do, Maryon Lane did in Nerina's rôle of A Young Girl; whenever the choreography showed any connection with the music she poured her unique rhythmic vitality into it, and even made some quite remarkably ugly lifts look tolerable.

FURNEAU HALL.

Owing to pressure of space we have had to omit a number of London Reviews this month, notably Margot Fonteyn's *Swan Lake* and Sylphides and Robert Helpmann's *Petrushka*. Furneau Hall will review these performances in our next issue.

**ALSO IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:** an exclusive interview with Robert Helpmann.





The Ukrainian State Cossacks at the Albert Hall.

## t.v. REVIEW

### Monday, March 3rd. A.T.V.—International Celebrity Festival.

THIS programme of celebrities included the Ukrainian State Cossack Company, Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes. As the Ukrainian Company were written up last month, it is sufficient for me to say that the verve and vitality of this wonderful company of dancers was an exciting event for television viewers. Equally exciting, as it is so rare, was the appearance of Margot Fonteyn with Michael Somes in the pas de deux from *Cinderella*. The first arabesque with perfect placing and impeccable line showed one of the reasons for Fonteyn's greatness. The lightning speed with which Fonteyn flashes into her poses and the exquisite grace of all her movements were a joy to watch.

A.T.V. are to be congratulated for giving their viewers this wonderful opportunity of having at least a glimpse of Britain's great ballerina. It is therefore a great pity that a programme such as this should be marred by the advertisements which were inserted at intervals, cutting all continuity and the final bows of the artists.

### Tuesday, 11th March—Chelsea at Nine—Granada. Lovers Parting.

The ballet presented was written by Jean Cocteau with choreography by Serge Lifar. The story concerns two young lovers (Claude Bessy and Max Buzzoni). The scene is the girl's room. The young man comes to visit her and the girl unsuccessfully pleads for his love. She shows her fear and struggle against the inevitable end of the affair, but it is to no avail, he leaves her prostrate with grief on the floor. Claude Bessy, for whom this was arranged, danced most beautifully and dramatically. What was puzzling was the behaviour of the young man who showed no interest or reason for visiting her at all.

### Sunday, 16th March—B.B.C. Television—Monitor. Solitaire.

The ballet section of this programme dealt with Kenneth Macmillan's ballet *Solitaire* which had its opening night at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden on Friday, 14th March. The two sequences shown were the Pas de Deux danced by Margaret Hill and Desmond Doyle, and the amusing dance with the long flute. The dancers taking part in this were Pirmin Trecu, Brian Shaw, Maryon Lane and Margaret Hill. When questioned about his ballets and how he goes about them, Mr. Macmillan said he first chose a piece of music which he liked and then fitted an idea to it. With this in mind he went straight into rehearsal and arranged the steps to complete the ballet. He went on to say that when he first started doing choreography he had not been very concerned with the subject matter, but now that he has done several ballets he hopes to concentrate on more serious themes in the future. He has already embarked on this line of composition with his latest ballet *The Burrow*.

### Sunday, 23rd March—B.B.C. Television—Music for You. The Rose Adagio.

Svetlana Beriosova partnered by her four suitors (Philip Chatfield, Desmond Doyle, Ronald Hynd and Gary Burne) danced this very

Continued at foot of next column

## PARIS

Two years ago, Petit was not very successful when he presented at the Théâtre de Paris a spectacle which tended more to music hall than to ballet. Critics were harsh towards him and the public kept away . . .

However, in his new spectacle which had a successful debut on February 18th at the Théâtre de l'Alhambra, Roland Petit has returned to his former sphere, that is to say to pure ballet.

Zizi Jeanmaire and Roland Petit are in perfect form. Dick Sanders and Veronika Mlakar top the bill in this spectacle not forgetting Jane Laoust, virtuoso of the tour and of acrobatics. *Carmen* was as successful as at its first performance.

There are also three new ballets in the programme. *Contre-Pointe* a ballet by Roland Petit, to music by Marius Constant and decors by the excellent abstract painter Poliakoff. It is a ballet abounding in mischievous humour. In certain respects, *Contre-pointe* resembles *Interplay* by Jerome Robbins, but in other ways the two choreographies are very different.

*La Rose des Vents* is a ballet by Roland Petit on a theme by Albert Vidalie to music by Darius Milhaud. Decors and costumes are by the painter Bazarte. The action of the ballet takes place in a port where an ugly, uncouth barmaid reveals herself as a vamp to a sailor (Roland Petit) on shore, also in search of an impossible love. The pas de deux danced by Roland Petit and Zizi Jeanmaire which occupies quite half of the ballet is full of invention, new ideas and charm.

However, *La Dame dans la Lune* (in homage to Meliès, author of the first fantastic films of 1900) is without doubt the most successful of them all. Roland Petit has evoked with delicate wit all the humour of the early cinema to deliciously burlesque music by Jean Francaix. The decors and costumes by the painter Edouard Lhermitte, the adopted son of Jean Cocteau, are both naïve and refined.

In *La Dame dans la Lune*, the lovely pas de deux for Dick Sanders and Veronika Mlakar is outstanding together with the wild French Can Can à la Toulouse Lautrec at the end which was very well performed by Roland Petit, Jane Laoust, Alice Bess, etc. This work although not a great ballet is a little masterpiece.

Michel Drach, the young scenario-writer, has just produced a short film, with Jean Babilée as the star, of the ballet *La Boucle*, presented last June at Enghien. The title of the film is *Auditorium* and the theme is as follows: a young man in a projection room falls in love with an advertisement for a pink soap, represented by a ballerina. The young man passes through the screen and goes in pursuit of her and the strangest adventures await him. Jean Babilée's performance is unequalled. With music by J. M. Damase and poetic, mysterious sets by Jean Tournier, this film is a success.

Janine Charrat and her company have returned to Paris after a tour of 120,000 kilometres in the Americas. This tour was preceded by the marriage of Janine Charrat with a young French producer, M. Gérard Munsch, now attached to the company as administrator and stage-manager. Janine Charrat had a contract for ten weeks in New York but this was extended to five months in view of her success. The company went on to Canada, California, New Orleans, Havana, Haiti, Mexico, etc. Janine Charrat had with her three excellent dancers, Josette Clavier, Hélène Trailine and Juan Guiliano, together with nine members of the corps de ballet. *Domino* to music by Brahms, *Arlequin* by the composer Stirn, and *Les Liens* by Semenov were very successful during the tour.

### THE DUEL

On the evening of Friday, March 21st the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas returned to Paris at the Champs Elysées Theatre. The return of the Marquis is always a formidable occasion. In the Avenue Montaigne projectors were switched on to the guests, and roses bloomed around the stage and the boxes. A Minister, Royal Highnesses and all "first night" Parisians were present. Before the rise of the curtain the Marquis came on to the stage and in a voice betraying his anger announced "Someone has just sent me an official notice forbidding this performance, but I shall ignore it in order not to disappoint you. They want to stop me giving *Noir et Blanc*, it is my best ballet, I am American, my whole troupe is American, in France I thought I was in the country of liberty, I have made a mistake, but it is not the fault of France, it is the fault of one Frenchman."

The dispute concerns *Suite en Blanc* which was created during

Continued on page 16

### T.V. REVIEW—Continued from previous column

exact sequence from *The Sleeping Beauty*. It was admirably done despite the lack of space. The setting was most unsuitable, the men's costumes looked incongruous, and the lighting was poor. This was unusual for a programme produced by Patricia Fov who has done some excellent work in the past.

HELEN ROSS.



Once again the ANNUAL CORK FESTIVAL, which opens in May, will have a native dance Company as one of its chief attractions.

Here is

# IRISH BALLET'S OWN SAGA

The success story of

## JOAN DENISE MORIARTY

by

ELISABETHE CORATHIEL

**M**ORE than once, the striking Irish element in English ballet has been remarked upon by balletomanes abroad, where Ireland, always tends to be looked upon as a land apart, full of witty, charming and romantic people, a dreamland where the seasons move in leisurely cycles and poetry has not yet vanished from daily life.

It seems quite natural that great ballet dancers should spring from such a favoured land, and with scarcely a moment's reflection one can reel off a formidable list of names betraying Hibernian origin—Ninette de Valois, Anton (Pat) Dolin, Markova, Ana Ricarda, Domini Callaghan, Desmond Doyle, Michael Hogan, Anthony Burke and many more. In American ballet circles, of course, the recurrence of Irish names is even more striking.

And what of Ireland itself? British ballet companies get an overwhelming welcome whenever they cross the Irish Channel these days, but the Emerald Isle has been a somewhat slow starter in creating a National Ballet of its own.

Slow, that is to say, in comparison with England, for an extremely interesting experiment has been going on in the lovely city of Cork for the last ten years, and is now beginning to show very noteworthy results. The heroine of this success story deserves to rank with Ninette de Valois for courage and tenacity.

Joan Denise Moriarty comes of South of Ireland parentage. As a small child she tended to walk badly, her toes turning in. On medical advice her mother decided to try ballet lessons as a cure for this, and little Joan, at the age of four, received her first instruction from Sheila Elliott Clarke. Much has happened since then, but Miss Moriarty still feels she owes a deep debt of gratitude to this earliest teacher, who not only corrected her physical handicap but laid in her soul the foundation of an intense love for ballet.

When Joan was eleven, the family moved to London, and her lessons continued, first under Espinosa, and then Phyllis Bedells. By this time ballet had become her obsession, and her parents took alarm—for they had no intention whatever of letting their little daughter take up a stage career. When all arguments failed, they simply stopped paying for lessons. But that got them nowhere; for the child saved up her pocket money, and paid for her own! This was just too much, so the grown-ups reluctantly gave in.

Joan started her professional career with Madame Rambert, getting wonderful all-round experience in a company with such future celebrities as Pearl Argyle, Freddy Ashton, William Chappell and the rest of that brilliant early crowd. But she had the misfortune to grow very tall, which limited her chances, even in character parts. So she decided to strike out on her own, and turned to Ireland, the home of her ancestors, choosing not Dublin, the war-time centre of cosmopolitan politics, but the more sedate and nationally-characteristic City on the delta of the River Lee. In the delightfully intellectual and cultural atmosphere of Cork she soon felt thoroughly at home.



Joan Denise Moriarty—Director of the Cork Ballet Company.

Yet it was by no means easy going to set up as a teacher of Ballet. One of the earliest hurdles that had to be taken was the actual education of the public as to the meaning of the word ballet. There was money enough in Cork; and parents were sufficiently enlightened to desire that their girls should be taught to dance; but the idea they had in mind was "fancy dancing." Why all this waste of time, doing "exercises at the barre"? "Just teach my daughter to do one or two pretty dances, that's all I want," mother after mother said. And Miss Moriarty had patiently to explain, over and over again, that barre exercises were just as necessary to a dancer as scales were to a musician.

Then there was the question of tights. "It took me three whole years to persuade my pupils to wear them," she told me. "Ballet lessons were social occasions, to which all the pupils turned up in their best party frocks, each trying to out-vie the others, while the mothers sat all round the room, exchanging small talk and making comparisons. Tights! Inherent Irish modesty simply would not stand for them! But gradually, of course, they learnt to think in terms of classical ballet."

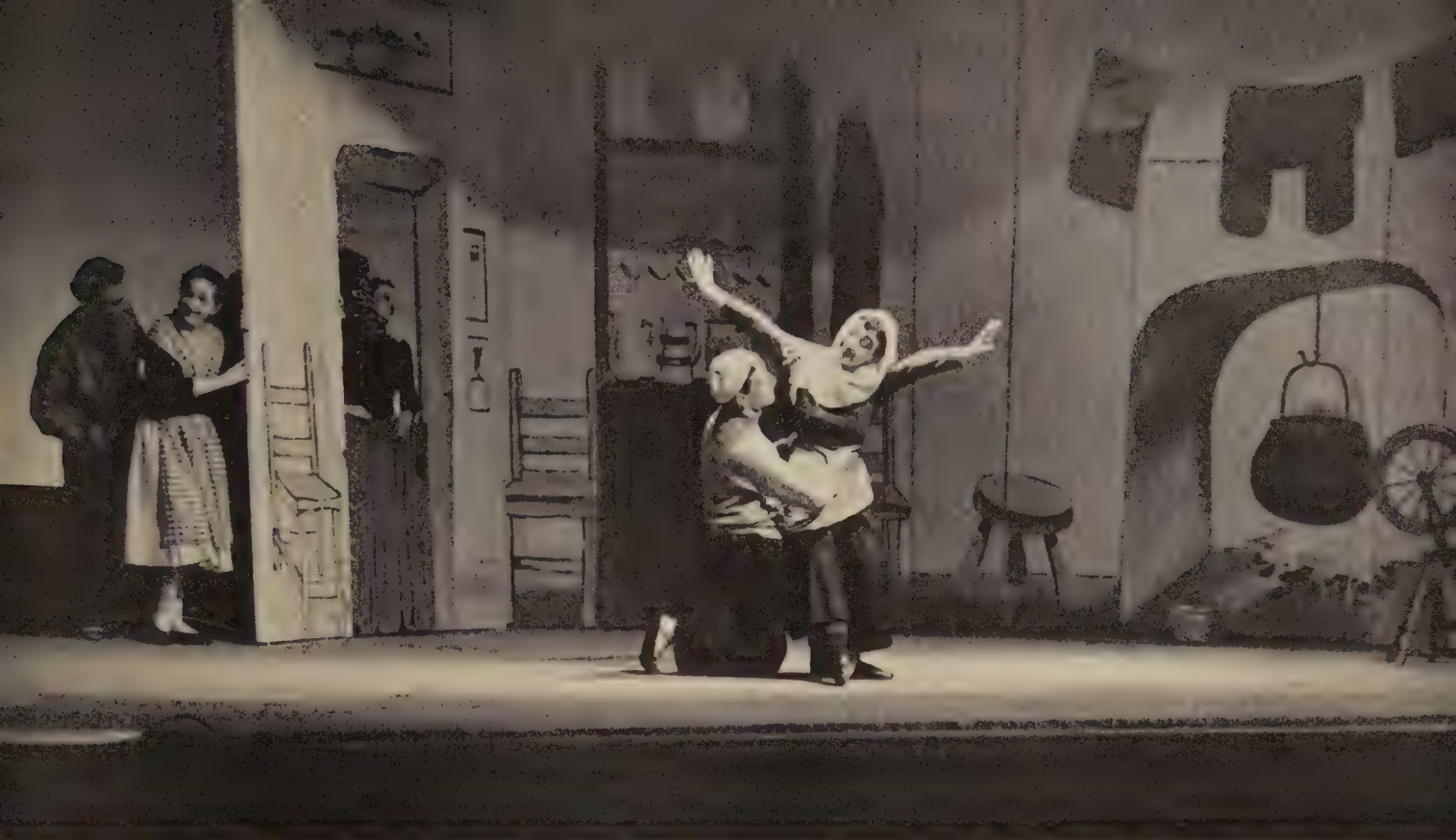
Like most pioneers in those early days, Miss Moriarty had difficulty in recruiting masculine talent. In response to an advertisement, one young man presented himself; and when she put him to the barre, to see what he was made of, it was quite obvious that he was completely mystified. It presently transpired that he had mis-read the advertisement; what he wanted was to train as a *Ballad* singer! However, he did after a time make up his mind to take ballet lessons—did quite well, in fact, and remained with the company for four years.

The turning-point in Miss Moriarty's venture occurred when she joined forces with Professor Aloys Fleischmann, the brilliant creator of the Cork Symphony Orchestra. No one was better able to understand and assist her in her dedicated purpose. Their collaboration began with Miss Moriarty playing the war pipes in the first performance of Professor Fleischmann's setting of *Clare's Dragoons*; but some years were to elapse before the first ballet performance with the Cork Symphony Orchestra materialised. When it did, Irish audiences became spoilt for any lesser company appearing only with a quartet or a gramophone, or a couple of pianos.

The first ballet production took place at Cork Opera House in 1947, and the presence in the audience of the then Minister for Post and

*Continued at foot of page 21*





*The Cork Ballet Company.*

*Above: Madeline Moore and Brian O'Riordan in *Moy Mell* (Scene 1).*

*Below: *The Seal Woman*, an Irish ballet based on an Irish legend, presented by the Company in 1956.*





# JULIA



**J**ULIA FARRON joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company in 1936—the youngest recruit ever. She was only fourteen at the time, and so small in stature that she could not even be cast for one of the four Little Swans—the other three were so much more mature! But her tininess came in handy for the youthful Heir in Geoffrey Toye's *Haunted Ballroom*, which was at the height of its popularity just at that time.

Little Julia received her first lessons in dancing from the late Madame Jessie Hogarth, who recognising the child's great promise, very magnanimously passed her on to one of her former pupils who was making a great name as a teacher—Miss Grace Cone. Julia progressed rapidly, and the chance to appear in Sadler's Wells was an early result. She has remained with the company ever since, dancing, in the course of her career, almost every role in the repertoire, with the exception of some of the leads. Julia is not a prima ballerina; but she is one of those efficient stalwarts on whom the real strength of the company largely rests. And, for her own part, she prefers character roles to Sweet Heroines.

In the course of her long connection with the original Sadler's Wells Company she has visited almost every European country, including France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, Ireland and Italy. And of course she has toured the length and breadth of Canada and the United States.

Her favourite country? For work, America—American audiences have no inhibitions, and they do show their feelings without restraint, whenever a show pleases them. For lazy holidays and a rest from work, Julia chooses a warm climate every time. Some of her most happily remembered holidays have been spent in Spain.

She does not hoard photos, and all pictures taken in the course of her work are alike to her—as soon as they have served their immediate purpose, she gets rid of them.

Equally balanced is her choice of parts. "I have had so many that I take them all in my stride," she says. "But when I do find myself preferring one to another, it is usually because the delineation calls for a more dramatic performance. I am often cast for 'wicked' women, and I must say these give much more chance for acting than the insipidly 'good' ones, hence my real enjoyment of them. I have a certain predilection—which is only natural—for the parts I have been privileged to create—like, for instance, the Wicked Sister in *Prince of the Pagodas*.

"I was still very young when I created my first individual role, a role which had been specially invented for me by Freddy Ashton. It was that of the little dog in *Wedding Bouquet*. Quite a step from that light-hearted fragment to my latest creation, the hard-hearted Princess in *Prince of the Pagodas*. Both in their own way have given me immense pleasure to interpret.

A popular dancer in a company like the Royal Ballet, working all the year round and taking long, arduous tours, has really very little home life. Miss Farron, who in private life is Mrs. Rodrigues, the celebrated choreographer, likes home-making but has never really been able to indulge in it without preoccupation. The couple have a fine young son, now at prep. school. "It was my good fortune to have a kind and understanding mother who took baby over whenever I had to go on long tours," said Julia. "I left him in the first instance when he was only ten months, and it was a terrible wrench! Although I knew that he could not have been in better hands, I missed all the fun of watching his very early development. However, mother had been teaching him to say 'good night' to our two photographs, so he soon got used to us when we returned. Are we going to make a dancer of him? I hardly think so—he is going to be too big, I'm afraid. But both his father and I are delighted that he is showing a great aptitude for, and love of, music."

Miss Farron does not think that getting married and having a family need interfere with a dancer's career. In this respect, her attitude is precisely that of the theatrical mothers of ancient tradition, who took their jobs in the family "craft" of showmanship as a matter of course, shouldering the normal duties of wives and mothers while acting as their husband's helpmates in the business as well. "Life must have been far more difficult in those days, when there were so few labour-saving appliances. If a wife in show business these days cannot cope, with all the mechanical aids available, she can't be very efficient!"

At the moment the Rodrigues' are busy moving house. They have acquired a charming little Georgian-style residence near Bayswater, and are having a glorious time fitting it up. "Our taste in curtainings, covers and so on is rather conservative; anyway, we are having to make do with the things we already possess," said Julia. "so there will be no ultra-modern or startling 'experiments.' But we do enjoy nice bright colours, and we shall have great fun doing some of the painting ourselves, if we can find time. In our early married life, when we had to watch our pennies, we spent a great deal of time poking round antique shops, picking up 'pieces' here and there. The task now will be to give these old friends, which mean so much to us, a restful and congenial background."

So, at the moment, her home is Julia's hobby. One thing is she looking forward to is the chance to own a pet cat. That will make it a *real* home, she feels.



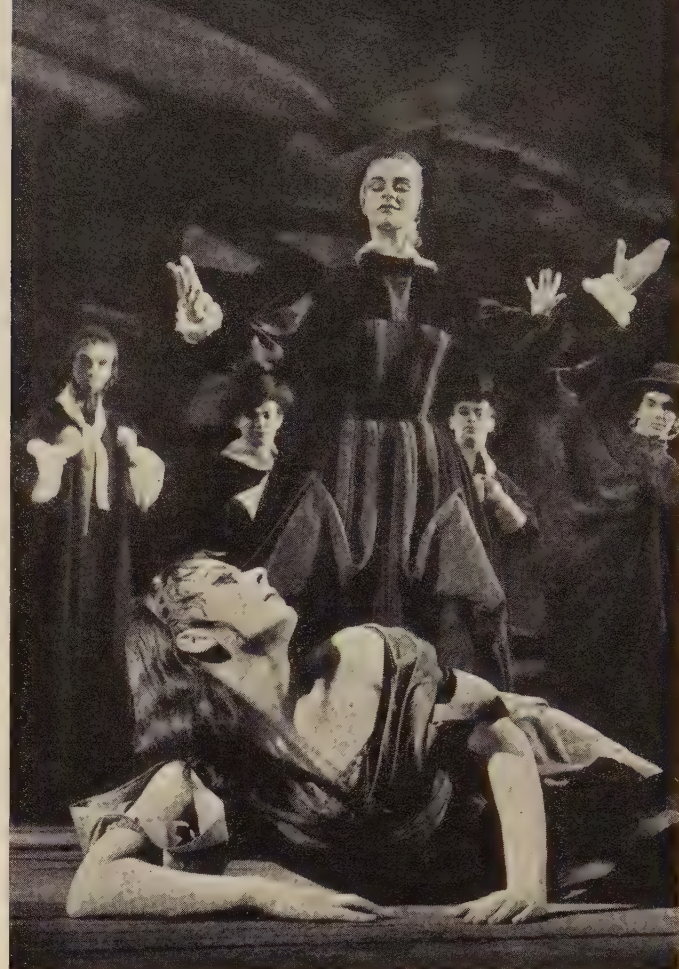


# FARRON

## Roles danced:

|                                        |                                                              |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Wedding Bouquet</i> .. ..           | Dog (first created rôle)                                     |
| <i>Swan Lake</i> .. ..                 | Every part except Odette-Odile                               |
| <i>Les Sylphides</i> .. ..             | Most parts (now usually dances Prelude)                      |
| <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> .. ..           | All the Fairies, the Queen, the Countess, Florestan's sister |
| <i>Coppelia</i> .. ..                  | Prayer and Czardas                                           |
| <i>Giselle</i> .. ..                   | Princess Bathilde, leading Wili                              |
| <i>Sylvia</i> .. ..                    | Diana                                                        |
| <i>Cinderella</i> .. ..                | Fairy Godmother                                              |
| <i>Rake's Progress</i> .. ..           | The Betrayed Girl                                            |
| <i>Checkmate</i> .. ..                 | Black and Red Queens                                         |
| <i>Gods Go A-Begging</i> .. ..         | Goddess                                                      |
| <i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i> .. ..      | Eurydice                                                     |
| <i>Miracle of the Gorbals</i> .. ..    | Prostitute                                                   |
| <i>Hamlet</i> .. ..                    | The Queen                                                    |
| <i>The Haunted Ballroom</i> .. ..      | Young Tregennis and Alicia                                   |
| <i>Adam Zero</i> .. ..                 | A Fate                                                       |
| <i>The Quest</i> .. ..                 | Faith                                                        |
| <i>Tricorne</i> .. ..                  | The Jota                                                     |
| <i>Boutique Fantasque</i> .. ..        | The Tarantella                                               |
| <i>Mlle. Angot</i> .. ..               | Mlle. Angot and Aristocrat                                   |
| <i>Donald of the Burthens</i> .. ..    | Mother and Queen                                             |
| <i>Ballabile</i> .. ..                 | Principal rôle                                               |
| <i>Mirror for Witches</i> .. ..        | Hannah                                                       |
| <i>Daphnis and Chloe</i> .. ..         | Lykanion and Nymph                                           |
| <i>The Prince of the Pagodas</i> .. .. | Princess Belle Epine                                         |
| <i>Noctambules</i> .. ..               | The Faded Beauty                                             |
| <i>Casse Noisette</i> .. ..            | (First appearance with the Company as Clara)                 |
| <i>Nursery Suite</i> .. ..             | Bo-peep                                                      |
| <i>Job</i> .. ..                       | Daughter                                                     |
| <i>Carnaval</i> .. ..                  | Columbine and Estrella                                       |
| <i>Cupid and Psyche</i> .. ..          | Psyche                                                       |
| <i>Les Patineurs</i> .. ..             | The White pas de deux, Blue and principal skaters            |

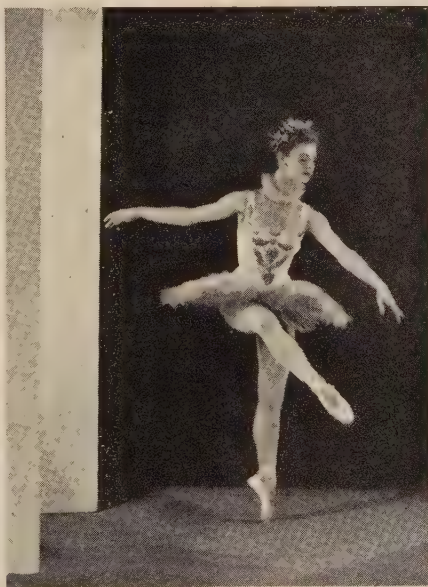
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|                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Façade</i> .. ..                 | The Milkmaid                  |
| <i>The Prospect before Us</i> .. .. | Mlle. Theodore                |
| <i>Wise Virgin</i> .. ..            | Bride and leading Wise Virgin |
| <i>The Wanderer</i> .. ..           | Compassion                    |
| <i>Dante Sonata</i> .. ..           | "Pamela May" Rôle             |
| <i>Ballet Imperial</i> .. ..        | Principal rôle                |
| <i>Veneziana</i> .. ..              | Principal rôle                |

## Operas

|                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Tannhauser</i> .. ..           | Venusberg Ballet (Macmillan) |
| <i>Midsummer's Marriage</i> .. .. | Cranko Ballet                |



Top left: A Studio Portrait of Julia Farron by John Hart.

Top right: A Mirror for Witches, Julia Farron as Hannah with Anne Heaton as Doll.  
Photo: Roger Wood

Left to right: As the Betrayed Girl in The Rake's Progress. Photo: Gordon Anthony

In the Tarantella, Swan Lake Photo: John Hart

As the Red Queen in Checkmate.  
Photo: Gordon Anthony

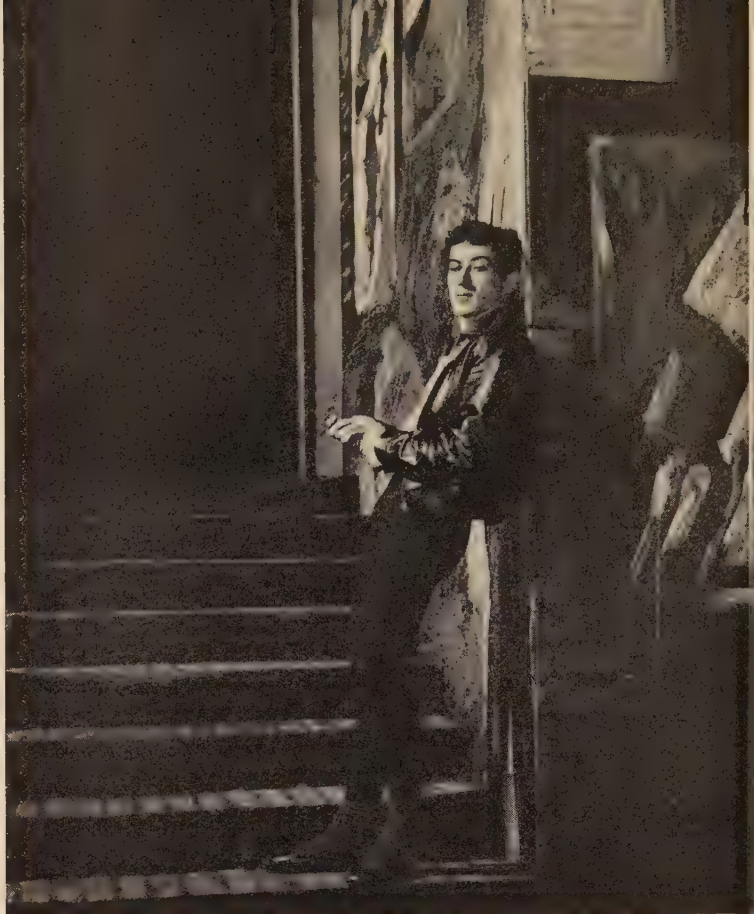
As one of Florestan's sisters in Sleeping Beauty.  
Photo: Gordon Anthony





As Petrushka

*Photo: Roger Wood*



The Pimp in *Miraculous Mandarin*

*Photo: Houston Rogers*

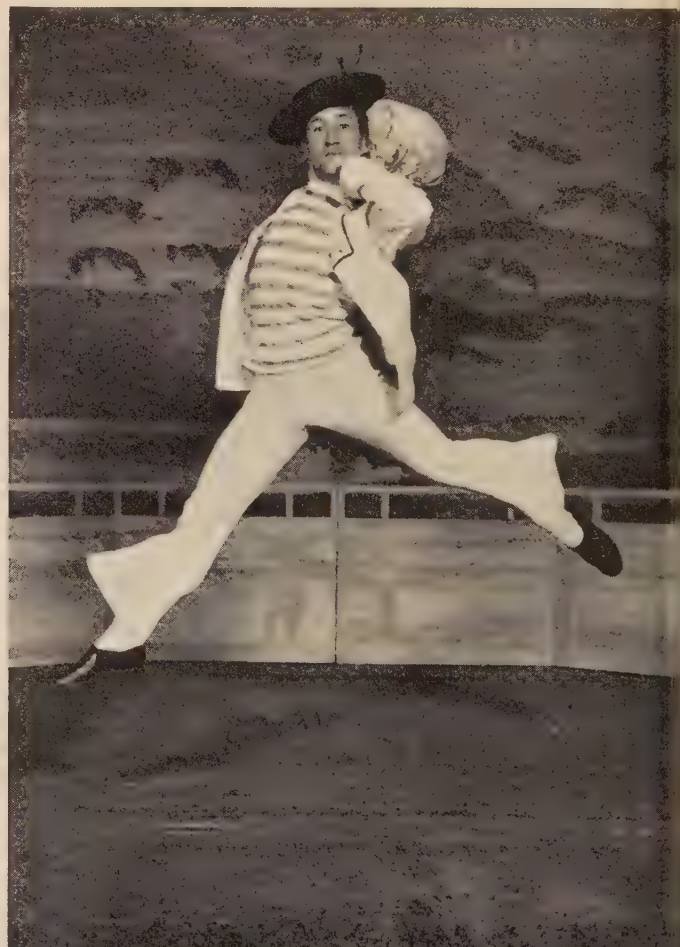
## ALEXANDER GRANT

In *Orpheo*

*Photo: Houston Rogers*

The Sailor in *Madame Chrysanthème*

*Photo: Baron*







MEN IN BALLET

## ALEXANDER GRANT

By SONIA ROBERTS

THE rise of Alexander Grant represents a most important landmark in the constantly evolving history of the Royal Ballet because he has proved that a dancer trained in the British system can be successful in fields outside the scope of the purely classical vein. Grant himself, however, shuns the classification of 'character dancer'. "To me—a character dancer suggests some-one who need never put on ballet shoes" he explained. "I prefer to think of myself as a demi-caractère dancer, for in my corps de ballet days, I tackled every type of role, including the Brown Boy in *Patineurs*. I appeared in *Symphonic Variations* for two and a half years."

Type casting came to Grant as a direct result of his outstanding success in *Mlle. Angot*. "Because my rendering of one bizarre little man took the public fancy—when later, I appeared in more straightforward roles—my critics—said 'why that isn't Alexander Grant.'" "I think they forgot that my natural character isn't a bizarre little man either" he added with a smile.

New Zealand born, Grant was the first overseas ballet student to arrive in Britain after the war. He had already waited two years for the war to end to enable him to take up his R.A.D. scholarship. "Berths were very hard to obtain at that time—so I came on a cargo boat round Cape Horn. Luckily I was far too excited about all the new things I was seeing to be worried when some of the lifeboats got smashed in a storm. I thought it was just one of the normal things that happened at sea."

Grant began dancing classes at the age of six, because in the words of his mother "he was always bouncing about to music and I thought he might just as well learn to do it properly." Early on he decided on a stage career but without any particular bias for dancing. "During the war I joined a concert party which gave shows for the New Zealand and American troops and I even sang on the local radio station."

However, by the time he arrived in Britain in February, 1946, his enthusiasm was such,

that the day after his arrival in London, he spent scouring the city in search of the Sadler's Wells Theatre. His lodgings in bomb-scarred Holborn, were, he recalls, ideally placed—midway between Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells. Grant appeared during his student days with the then recently formed Theatre Ballet, in such works as *Khadra* as well as walking on at the Opera House. He had just departed for a provincial tour with the Theatre Ballet, when in August 1946 he was recalled and notified that a place was available for him in the senior company. His first appearance as a fully fledged company member was in the *Sleeping Beauty*. This was the same production with which the Sadler's Wells Ballet had reopened at the Opera and it is a lasting regret of Alexander Grant's that he was not able to obtain a ticket for that first thrilling performance at Covent Garden.

Alexander Grant believes that it is a most important facet of a dancer's training to observe other artists at work, although he admits that to a trained eye small technical errors can be very irksome. "But when one watches a production like the Bolshoi *Romeo and Juliet* and knows the work that must have gone into such an achievement then one's pleasure is all the keener" he observed. Of the repertoire given by the Bolshoi in London, Alexander Grant enjoyed *Romeo and Juliet* best but he says "It is not what the Bolshoi Ballet does—it is the way that they do it that is so remarkable. Sincerity and truth are so much a part of their performance. Isolation without outside criticism has enabled them to concentrate on that part of their national ballet that was good in 1919 until now, in 1958, it nears perfection. Although our choreography is more inventive, they excel in story telling and characterisation."

Regarding his own roles Grant has no favourite. The role which he will dance next is always the one that interests him most, although his recent re-creation of *Petrouchka* is something that he has always wanted to do.

"Of course I had read about Nijinsky's

interpretation but prior to our production I think I had only seen one performance of the ballet. I spent a lot of time listening to Stravinsky's music but the one who helped me most was Tchernicheva. It is impossible to teach a dancer in words—ballet is the art of movement and it must be taught through movement. That is Tchernicheva's special gift, when explaining the role—she is *Petrouchka* and you understand the intricacies of the character merely by following her movements."

Yet while paying this lavish tribute to Tchernicheva and her memories of the original production of *Petrouchka*, Grant was careful to stress that in his opinion every artist must add something of his own to the role he performs. "The influence of others can be a danger to the immature artist" he explained. "If you copy accurately someone else then the best you can ever hope to be is a second rate version of that person."

"One decides on general lines the basis of the character. For example, I believe that *Petrouchka* is primarily a doll endowed with a few human feelings he does not fully understand, rather than a human being confined within the feeble limits of a doll's brain and body. However it is only at the dress rehearsal that the character comes to life. Make up transforms the artist. Each stroke of paint takes you further from yourself—draws you nearer to the prince or the puppet you are playing. The costume is the final touch. Once this is on, you can decide if your sketch characterisation was correct. More often than not you have to begin all over again because you realise your original idea was badly off the beam. After the first performance, the character continues to build up although it is set in a regular pattern. A sympathetic audience can also help to make a character stronger. A bored audience can lessen its impact but I do not believe that the audience can actually alter the status of one character in relation to the others."

Regarding the lack of important new male roles, Alexander Grant said that he regarded this as an unfortunately unalterable

Above as The Miller in *The Three Cornered Hat* Photo: Angus McBean

continued on page 18



the Occupation on 23rd July, 1943 at the Paris Opera, with choreography by Lifar, music by Lalo (from the ballet *Namouna*). A version, under the title *Noir et Blanc* was presented during the 1946/7 season by the Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo, later taken over by the Marquis de Cuevas who had bought the Company and reformed it as the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo—later du Marquis de Cuevas.

The public did not understand what had happened, but after the first ballet ended people began to whisper that Monsieur Hirsch, Administrator of the Paris Opera was the originator of the opposition. Serge Lifar, in the next box to that of the Marquis, shook his fist at him and began to insult him. The curtain then rose on the second ballet *L'Amour Et Son Destin*, by Lifar, who overcome by the general enthusiasm when the curtain dropped, approached the Marquis to attempt a reconciliation. But de Cuevas drew back and brandished his fist. Lifar threw his handkerchief at his feet as a challenge. The Marquis picked up the handkerchief and delivered a slap to Lifar. "I will send you my seconds tomorrow," said Lifar.

The next day Serge Lifar sent his seconds to the Marquis, two of his colleagues at the Opéra, Max Bozzoni and Lucien Duthoit. The Marquis chose the Deputy Jean-Marie Le Pen and Mr. Valoussière, director of the Champs Elysées Theatre. The Marquis, to whom Lifar had left the choice of weapons, chose the sword, and from the day following the incident is reported to have practised with a well-known fencing master at his private house at the Quai Voltaire. While waiting for the Marquis and Serge Lifar to cross swords, we can consider the first programme of the season of the Marquis and his Company. This is one of the best they have presented. The corps de ballet has been completely changed. There are now four female stars Rosella Hightower, Genia Melikova, Nina Vyroubova and Jacqueline Moreau. Serge Golovine, in excellent form and more astonishing than ever, with Nicholas Polajenko, Vasil Tupin and Georges Goviloff.

As well as *Noir et Blanc*, which has kept all its freshness and is undoubtedly a charming ballet, there was a new ballet on the Symphonie Pathétique of Tchaikovsky: *L'Amour Et Son Destin*. The public does not know exactly who made this ballet because the programme says "Choreauteur Serge Lifar, Choreography, Dimitri Parlic." The surrealistic decor of Georges Wakhevitch is very beautiful. The subject concerns the relentless struggle of two lovers against destiny, Nina Vyroubova and Serge Golovine in the rôles of the lovers, Genia Melikova as Destiny, and Seduction by Jacqueline Moreau. This ballet, without being a masterpiece, without pretence to choreographic novelty, is nevertheless well constructed, with constant movement and a few beautiful adagios majestically interpreted by Nina Vyroubova.

*Gâté Parisienne* was perhaps the biggest success of the evening. Leonide Massine danced the well known rôle of the Peruvian alternately with Daniel Sellier, who portrayed the rôle extremely well. Rosella Hightower, is a glove seller with exceptional finesse, lightness and precision. It is the general opinion that this is one of the best rôles in the career of this star. The decor and costumes after Winterhalter were very effective. The audience gave an enthusiastic and affectionate reception to the great choreographer and to his ballet, which like *Le Beau Danube* will remain with us a long time yet.

#### THE STRIKE AT THE OPERA

A number of dancers who had vowed to resist and to continue the general strike gave way during these last few weeks and returned

Continued on page 18

# New Books

Reviewed by

PIGEON CROWLE

*Modern Dance.* By Jane Winearls. (A. & C. Black, 21s.)

Isadora Duncan was the pioneer of freedom in the dance and Fokine and Massine were among the many dancers and teachers profoundly influenced by her, as was Rudolf von Laban, experimenting and teaching in Switzerland. But she made no attempt to codify her ideas and her very personal art died with her.

The system discussed in this book is that evolved from Laban's teachings by two of his most gifted pupils, Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder, and used by them as the technical basis of the Ballet Jooss.

When Jooss was forced by Nazi persecution to leave Germany, he and his company were offered asylum at Dartington Hall in Devon where, under Leeder, a school was established that attracted students from all over the world. Also, with the help of a subsidy from private patrons, Jooss was able to concentrate on perfecting his company and to take it for several months each year on extensive foreign tours within worrying overmuch about box office receipts. It was led by two highly gifted dancers, Ulla Soderbaum and Hans Zullig, while its repertoire rested chiefly on two outstanding ballets, *The Green Table* and *Big City*.

The limitations of expressionism, however, were already being felt when the war created new problems, and in 1947 the Ballet Jooss was dissolved. Leeder now established his London school where many pupils of various professions passed through his hands, while in Germany Jooss gathered together a new group. To compete with the ever-growing trend towards classical technique, he included many adapted classical steps in his choreography, but it lacked inspiration and in 1953, once again, the group was disbanded and Jooss devoted himself to teaching.

England is a stronghold of the classical ballet and expressionism in dancing as exemplified by Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and José Limon has never had the same following as in America and Germany. Kurt Jooss the least self-conscious exponent, was the most popular but hitherto there has been no text book on the Jooss-Leeder method, and so the aim of this book is to preserve its technical form and to offer a guide, illustrated with many drawings and diagrams, to the professional dancer and teacher.

*Folk Dance Guide*, 1958. (Paul Schwartz, New York, \$1)

Though this booklet, now in its eighth year of publication, contains a most useful bibliography of text books, theses, and articles by international authors on folk dance in general, its chief interest is for the American reader for it is mainly a survey of folk dance in the United States. There is a calendar of annual events in America, an index of instruction groups and a section devoted to poetical and prose quotations.

A. & C. Black have issued a second edition of *Alicia Markova*, No. 6 in their *Dancers of To-day* series. The first edition was published in 1954, the new edition has been revised by Cyril Swinson. The price is 7s. 6d.

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## MEET OUR DANCERS

**A**USTRALIA, like most of the other former colonies "liberated" this century is in the throes of a cultural Naissance; for fifty years imitative of everything Britain and Europe could dogmatize, for another half century selfconsciously Australian, she has at last found an idiom at once distinctively Antipodean without being "reactionary". Ray Lawler's plays, Sidney Nolan's paintings and the new "Organic" school of contemporary poets are all contributing to the establishment of an Australian culture pattern; but nothing is so splendidly flourishing as the dance—on the oldest of the continents, sparsely enough populated for there to be datum a sense of space and natural rhythm.

One of the best, and certainly the most typical of the first generation of "Australian" ballerinas is Margaret Grey.

Born 23 years ago in Melbourne she went on from the classes held at the Gemazzano Convent to Laurel Martin's Ballet Guild school in 1947; there she worked so enthusiastically and showed such unusual promise that in less than three years she was dancing *Giselle* in the corps, and taking part in all the ballets (a not inconsiderable number) in the Guild's repertoire. In 1952 she was sent to Hamilton to be Director of the branch school there (Government subsidised), where she stayed for a year before rejoining the company in Melbourne as principal dancer. 1954 saw her in most of the Melbourne performances of Classical ballet, and on tour with the Guild—visiting places in the outback where ballet fever is high, on an Arts Council Kulturwunder.

It was in 1954 that she became closely associated with a movement of dancers,



Margaret Grey

musicians and choreographers which aimed at an "all Australian dance mood" and the title role in *Mathinna* was created for her—a role of which she had this to say in an interview with the Press last year (C; TIMES, 29.9.56):

"... it is a new Australian ballet which has severed the 'inevitable' links with both classical and contemporary European ballet; the second act is danced barefoot and to the rhythm of native drums alone, and the decor and musical atmosphere build up to such a pitch of original excitement that in the end it is possible to re-

## AUSTRALIA

BY

Roy MacGregor-Hastie

admit the traditional ballet without losing anything we gain."

The story, of an aborigine girl turned out of the home in which she has been brought up, spurned by them and by her tribe to die in the desert, is 'native' enough, but, typically, it is not so native in its interpretation that it becomes merely an extension of the folk dance—nor is there only a 'folk dance sequence' to set off the intellectualisation of the classical majeure.

Wisely, after a season of experiment, Margaret went back to the exigent roles she had learnt to dance so well, and matured to a *Giselle* (1956) that forced even the critics most hostile to the "experimenters" to admit her extraordinary talent as proven. She continued to dance the principal roles in new ballets—*Choreomania*, *En Cirque*, and others created for Ballet Guild—practised, and experimented, until at the end of 1956 she felt ready for and in need of wider schooling and experience and set off to see Europe. On her way to Britain she stopped off at Capetown, where the Cape Coloured Ballet attracts any lover of the dance anxious to see one of the few unspoiled idiomatic companies, arriving at Southampton in October (1956).

Margaret studied for six months with Da Voss, before going on tour with the Western Ballet—similarly inclined to exploit the medium in such a way that its social relevance is increased; she said recently that both the classical and contemporary roles must be in the repertoire of any dancer who hopes to live in and enliven ballet, and one of her criticisms of the English ballet





# News of Dancer

## MUNICH

world is that there is so much tacit acceptance of whatever is onstage, such a dearth of critical interest on the part of the lay public, that a staleness of mind attacks both audience and company and cuts them both off from the majorities. Here in the U.K. she finds a Classicism for its own sake—and a modernism for its own sake—seldom meeting, seldom reaching the unconverted, seldom in contact with artists working in other media (poets, painters, sculptors) all of whose interest is relevant to the dancer's maturity.

The Bolshoi Company was nearer to her ideal of a Classical ballet moving unself-consciously towards a 'live contemporary Classicism'—Ulanova's heirs and successors more than Galina's dancing itself; both the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. have found in their own ways a distinctive idiom in no way 'reactionary'—Margaret hopes to find a new mood here when she comes again.

On December 10th, 1957 she sailed back to Australia, to become again principal with the BALLET GUILD and to work in the new (there) television stage with her associates of the *Mathinna* days now trying to master its potentialities and limitations. From her *Coppelia*, *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker* to the barefoot savagery of the early aborigine dance drama she has drawn enough on which to work out her own patterns of movement at a time when Australia not only needs all her artists at home, but can give them opportunities non-existent a few years ago in the Commonwealth, and greater there now than anywhere else, perhaps, in the Western world.

## ALEXANDER GRANT

*Contd. from page 15*

circumstance. "Ballets tend to be built round the ballerina because she alone is capable of sustained action. A male dancer dancing flat out can make 1½–2 minutes continuous dancing. There is no step which allows him to rest in motion in the same way that the use of the pointe and the arabesque allow the ballerina momentary pause" and it is the male duty to enhance and show off the ballerina to every advantage." He did prophesy however the return to favour of the three act ballet although it is still very old-fashioned in many ways. "Ten years ago the Bolshoi repertoire would have seemed twice as old fashioned as it did last year" he remarked.

Like many dancers Alexander Grant finds that his job leaves him very little time for a regular hobby. By way of relaxation he deals with the odd jobs that occur in the house and garden. A country-lover by choice he has found the ideal compromise between this desire and the need to live near the theatre, in a house with a garden bordering on Battersea Park.

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Benjamin Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas* launched the biggest popular success the Munich Opera Ballet has scored since the 1951 Gsovsky production of *Cinderella*. Alan Carter, requested by Britten himself, undertook a rival choreography to Cranko's—deliberately abstaining from seeing the Royal Ballet version until finishing his own. So the première on March 17th—first three act ballet since *Abraxas* in 1948 and most costly production since who knows when—had a special touch from the start. This had been increased by the postponement of the first night which had to be called off for lack of some 80 out of 180 costumes, and by quite a few predictions that the German mentality would unfavourably react toward Neo-Romanticism of a Cranko fairy-tale-cocktail style. Indeed any serious criticism against the ballet can only be linked with the libretto, but enough has been said about this, and Carter had no choice. But all went very well, people applauded long after the iron curtain had gone down, and this applause had commenced from the very first number of Act I, thus stretching out the evening to a three-hour affair.

There is unanimous appraisal of Fabius v. Gugel's surrealistic decor done in the style he first employed in *Giselle*. Here is modern man's guide to romanticism! Gugel introduced strange moveable parts into his decor thus blurring the difference between persons and things. The decor in Act II takes part in the dance while the dancers are shaped like fossils.

Carter with his choreography (done within two months!) takes to a new style—long asked for, and long looked forward to. While up to now he tended to think up awfully complicated and intricate enchainements in order to analyse the music, he now allows his dancers to dance more conventionally and to score success with the broader public. Applause proved how right he was with an audience that showed such a demand for 1890 ballet conception. So Alan allowed us to see the same sequences of steps repeated, in maneges, piqués en manège, and laid out his dances in a grand and generous way. He avoided copying national dances for his four kings but invented a stylised version well accepted. Act II—also due to decor and lightning projections—does not show the weaknesses reported from the Royal Ballet version. Here it is Act III which asks for some cuts. An important trick was Alan's comic interpretation of the libretto in Act I where his gavotte is a parody and where his old king (interpreted by 56 year old Walter Matthes) is more of a fool than of an aged majesty. One is surprised, however, over the lack of employment for the children as well as the fool, whose rôle is feeble, and not at all witty, funny or remarkable.

Star hit of the night was Natascha Trofimowa as Belle Epine. She assumed the personality of a woman whose coldness froze both stage and audience. Her développés certainly were poisoned and deadly, and it was a special pleasure to see her turn into failli arriving at that position as if she was pinned down to the ground—superb in technique and dramatic "presence." Annette Chappell as Belle Rose made up with her sweet and lovely personality what she lacked in technical ability. In her unsupported adagio variations, she had trouble in keeping balance. Thus the variations of the Grand Pas de Deux lacked accentuation and therefore seemed empty and rather like an improvisation of the moment.

If there exists a prince on the stage it is Heino Hallhuber whose dynamics this time were in full accord with the music. Also excelling was Inge Bertl—very precise and with excellent ports de bras, in which she dominated over Joan Harris. Paul Wunsch, as Flame in Act II, was worn down in front of you by a tour de force, Hannes Winkler, making his debut as soloist, obviously did not feel at home. He replaced Franz Baur who was indisposed. Among the kings, Hans Schöner has improved. He seems softer and executed his pirouettes more precisely than he used to do. But in his tours en l'air one still feels uneasy since he does not convey enough assurance. This is quite different with Will Spindler, King of the West. From the group it was Hilde Stadler excelling in both Act II, and Act III pas de six.

Among the audience were Mr. Beriosoff with all of his soloists from the Stuttgart Ballet. If I am not entirely mistaken Munich and Stuttgart are developing a very healthy and promising ballet rivalry. After the Stuttgart *Belle en Bois Dormée* and the Munich *Prince of the Pagodas* the first round seems to be a tie!

So far the 1958 season in Munich outside of the Opera Ballet consisted solely of chamber dancing, and among that quite a few "low"-lights. While Susanna and José are close to receiving an honorary Munich citizenship, Alexander v. Swaine with Liza Czobel appeared for the first time for five years. Their epoch in Germany has passed. It is a pity to see these truly creative dancers disappear. Pryagopal, the Indian Manipur dancer before returning to India gave a few farewell performances. Miskovitch and his group while having popular success were booed at during the performance, and virtually destroyed by the press for "lack of taste, femininity, plagiarism, and for misemployment of the dancers."

The near future will bring Bettina Falckenberg and Günter Titt, German mimes, and a lecture demonstration on Modern Dance by Maja Lex from Cologne. From April 1st, Boris Kniasseff will teach a course at the Roleff-King Studios in Munich. All these events are sponsored or managed by the Freunde des Ballets.

DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN.

## PARIS NEWS—Continued from page 16

to the fold. However, there were about twenty who would not give way and they have reported the Direction of the Opéra to the Magistrature du Travail. The Direction of the Opéra on the other hand has opened a competition for the engaging of male dancers. On Wednesday, the 25th of March the ballet performances returned to normal. At the same time it was announced that Mlle. Josette Amiel has been nominated star. In the same programme Yvette Chauvire made her reappearance at the Opéra and there is talk of her définitive return to the great Theatre.

FERDINAND REYNA.

*Footnote:* For the benefit of our readers who may not have read the much publicised event, the duel has been fought outside Paris, Serge Lifar receiving a superficial wound in his arm, Honour has been satisfied, and all is well.



# Around the World

## MONTE CARLO

J. R. FARRINGTON

The rumours recently current in Monte Carlo that the Easter Ballet Season might be curtailed owing to the heavy outlay by the Société des Bains de Mer on buildings and improvements have proved to be entirely false. Even the experienced Eugene Grunberg must have had some worries as to how to present the galaxy of international stars collected here for "Les Ballets de Pâques." Fonteyn and Somes, Chauviré and the newly created danseuse étoile Amiel with that admirable partner Renault, Sombert and Babilée; these alone would fill a programme to satisfy the most demanding. But, in addition, Miskovitch brought his "Ballet 1958 de Paris," with Biegovitch, Meyer, Saviska and Carrié dancing with Sparemblek, Sulich and Dragadze.

The programme, given in four Gala performances, opened with *Cycle*, music by Ivan Semenov and choreography by Jean Guelis, décor by Levasseur. Danced by Ballet 1958 de Paris this ballet showed the evolution of life in another world. Somewhat abstract in form and not always helped by the music, which may have been the cause of occasional rather ragged dancing, I did not think that this ballet did justice to Miskovitch and his dancers.

Presented for the third time recently in Monte Carlo the Lifar-Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* pas de deux was beautifully danced by Amiel and Renault, the new danseuse étoile well expressing the delicate pathos of the rôle.

*L'Ecuyère*, by Lifar and Nepo to music by J. Kosma, I found entirely satisfying in dancing, music and décor. Chauviré gave a delightfully finished performance in the title rôle and Miskovitch danced superbly. His powerful stage personality and virile technique establish him as one of the leading male dancers today. The mime of Sparemblek as the clown was quite Marcel Marceau in its eloquence of gesture, and Sulich was arrogantly brutal as the unpleasant ring master. This ballet deservedly met with a great reception.

A hush of expectation preceded the rise of the curtain for *La Péri*. Dame Margot is known to cherish an affection for Monte Carlo, which is returned by the Monégasques, who have not forgotten her dancing for them in the open air on the occasion of the Prince's wedding. I did not think that the décor was quite adequate to the occasion. A pair of wings above the ballerina recalled the Royal Air Force badge and one would not expect to see a Péri reclining upon a distant forest bank the geometric wooden supports of which were obvious. But such mundane details were forgotten in the beautiful, fluent interpretation of the ballet, which was enthusiastically applauded. It was a proud moment for the many English present.

A last minute alteration in the programme brought France's leading dancers immediately to follow their British counterparts. It is always a delight to see Chauviré dance the *Casse-Noisette* pas de deux, and Renault gave her full scope to show her lovely technique.

Babilée has modified the macabre ending of the Cocteau-Petit ballet *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort* since I last saw him dance it with Paula Hinton. The sombre garret now changes to a view of the housetops of Paris, through which the girl, personifying Death, finally leads away the dead youth. The mechanism for effecting this rapid change of décor must have caused some anxiety, for at one tense moment just after the opening, the walls of the garret swayed ominously. Sombert was most effective as the tough girl, particularly when she repeatedly kicks the distracted youth, whose reactions demand the great athletic ability of such a dancer as Babilée. This ballet is intensely dramatic and in France is now one of the best known of Petit's works.

The only première on the programme was the last item, *Cache-Cache*, a ballet to music by Yves Clauoué and a colourful beach décor by Levasseur. The choreography of Ronnie Aul was lively, if not particularly original. Miskovitch's young dancers seemed thoroughly to enjoy this romp which provided a suitably gay envoi to a memorable evening of Ballet.

We were all glad to see Richard Blareau back in charge of the National Opera Orchestra. His experience of ballet composition and flair for musical liaison with dancing ensured a most finished performance. Kresimir Sipus conducted for three of the ballets.

It may be thought that this report covers our Easter Season. Actually the SBM provided in addition a programme by the Spanish dancer Mariemma and a four day appearance by the Hanover Opera Ballet. Reports on these will appear in the next number of *Ballet Today*.

## NEW YORK

HOPE SHERIDAN

The New York City Ballet's second new *Agon*, was presented on 1st December. However, the ballet was first given in a special preview on the previous Wednesday, 27th November, at a benefit for the New York March of Dimes. In 1954, under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the music was specially commissioned from Igor Stravinsky for the New York City Ballet. The score had already been performed in Paris and California, though Balanchine's choreography was seen now for the first time.

Diana Adams  
and  
Arthur Mitchell  
rehearsing  
*Agon*.



Devoid of any provision for décor and scenery the ballet was conceived by Stravinsky to be independent of visual period and style. The programme notes explain that the *Agon* pieces were all modelled after examples in a French dance manual of the mid-seventeenth century, but beyond only the most ephemeral allusion to construction, the three parts of which the ballet is composed bear absolutely no resemblance to their namesakes.

The ballet opens with a pas de quatre for Todd Bolender, Roy Tobias, Jonathan Watts and Arthur Mitchell. They are joined by Diana Adams, Melissa Hayden, Barbara Walczak and Barbara Milberg to form a pas de huit and eventually by Roberta Tubell, Francia Russell, Dido Sayers and Ruth Sobotka to make the third and last pas de quatre of Part I. Part II contains the meat of the work in the form of two sets of pas de trois and a pas de deux. The first pas is divided into a Saraband for Bolender, a Gailliard for Walczak and Milberg and a coda for all three. The second pas fares better although it opens with a fairly undistinguished Bransle Simple for Tobias and Watts. They do, however, set the scene for the entrance of Melissa Hayden who executes an extremely ugly variation of great virtuosity entitled Bransle Gay. Beneath all this tomfoolery there is a continuous undercurrent of urbane sophistication seldom seen elsewhere.

Surely it must stem from the Diaghilev era where private jokes were the *raison d'être* for more than one work. Miss Hayden is a dancer of accomplishment and honesty, it is most unfortunate that she is consistently given ungraceful poses and almost masculine enchainements. In the pas de trois which follows, Miss Hayden's two partners, Tobias and Watts twist and turn her as if she were a hemp rope instead of a woman. If this is the choreographer's intent, and we must assume it is, then one very fine dancer has been wasted. The pas de deux for Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell is only slightly less ugly but certainly the most grotesque. *Agon* more resembles a gymnastic tournament than it does a ballet. Surely every dancer on stage spends most of his time counting and the expressions worn by even the most veteran of the soloists more closely resembles terror than concentration.

Audience reaction to *Agon* would tend to indicate a first-class hit, but I for one find it monotonous in its dernier cri and ugly gymnasticism.

The third of the new works, *Gounod Symphony*, to Gounod's Symphony No. 1 with choreography by George Balanchine was premiered on 8th January after one postponement. Costumes for the works were designed and executed by Karniska, and Horace Armistead's set for *Lilac Garden* once again does yeoman's service. This is one of the most charming décors Armistead has ever designed and it is a delight to see it once again. Unfortunately, Karinska's costumes, with their circular, full, peach-coloured skirts for the girls, and odd, mutton-leg-shouldered tunics for the boys are very close to a catastrophe. Everyone looks strangely like a provincial high school recital. Gounod's score, composed in 1856, has rarely seen the light of a conductor's stand, and for my taste, can spend the next 100 years in the dark.

It is mildly romantic, certainly not disagreeable, but totally lacking in any degree of melodic invention or orchestral colouration. It ripples along, going nowhere, and finally runs itself out never having built to any climax. The choreography by Mr. Balanchine, bears all the earmarks of a flanking action—something new to feed the hungry audience while bigger things are worked on. It keeps the music adequate company, nothing more. There is an interesting pas de douze for six couples who vary each enchainement with a new set of partners. There is also a pleasant enough pas de deux for Jacques d'Amboise and Maria Tallchief.

(To be continued.)



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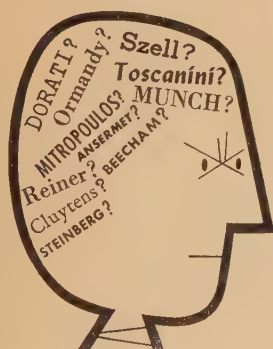
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# Ballet Guide

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| 1st  | May | Thurs. | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair, Linden, Jackson, Shaw)                                        |
| 2nd  | "   | Fri.   | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Beriosova, Chatfield, Lindsay, Page)                                         |
| 3rd  | "   | Sat.   | (mat) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Jackson, Chatfield, Boulton, Park, Usher)                                    |
| 5th  | "   | Mon.   | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Fonteyn, Somes, Lindsay, Jackson, Shaw)                                      |
| 6th  | "   | Tues.  | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Linden, Blair, Boulton, Park, Usher)                                         |
| 7th  | "   | Wed.   | (eve) | <i>Les Sylphides, Petrushka, The Lady and the Fool</i>                                                   |
| 8th  | "   | Thurs. | (eve) | <i>Les Sylphides, Petrushka, Homage to the Queen</i> (Guest artist: Helpmann)                            |
| 10th | "   | Sat.   | (mat) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Jackson, Chatfield, Lindsay, Park, Usher)                                    |
| 10th | "   | Sat.   | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair, Linden, Page, Clegg)                                          |
| 13th | "   | Tues.  | (eve) | <i>Ballet Imperial, Hamlet, Petrushka</i> (Guest artist: Helpmann)                                       |
| 17th | "   | Sat.   | (mat) | <i>The Shadow, Coppelia</i> (Boulton, Doyle, Nerina, Blair. Guest artist: Helpmann)                      |
| 17th | "   | Sat.   | (eve) | <i>The Shadow, Coppelia</i> (Boulton, Doyle, Jackson, Blair. Guest artist: Helpmann)                     |
| 20th | "   | Tues.  | (eve) | <i>Ballet Imperial, The Rake's Progress, Petrushka</i>                                                   |
| 22nd | "   | Thurs. | (eve) | <i>Les Sylphides, The Firebird, Coppelia, Act III</i>                                                    |
| 23rd | "   | Fri.   | (eve) | <i>Solitaire</i> (Linden, Shaw, Trecu, Lane, Hynd), <i>Giselle</i> (Fonteyn, Somes, Jackson, Lane, Shaw) |

## THE ROYAL BALLET VISIT TO BRUSSELS

### Exhibition Hall

|      |     |      |       |                                                                        |
|------|-----|------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26th | May | Mon. | (eve) | <i>Homage to the Queen, Scenes de Ballet, Sleeping Beauty, Act III</i> |
|------|-----|------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Monnaie Theatre

|      |      |        |       |                                                   |
|------|------|--------|-------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 28th | May  | Wed.   | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Fonteyn, Somes)       |
| 29th | "    | Thurs. | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Nerina, Blair)        |
| 30th | "    | Fri.   | (eve) | <i>Checkmate, Firebird, Homage to the Queen</i>   |
| 31st | "    | Sat.   | (eve) | <i>Checkmate, Firebird, Homage to the Queen</i>   |
| 1st  | June | Sun.   | (mat) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Beriosova, Chatfield) |
| 1st  | "    | Sun.   | (eve) | <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> (Fonteyn, Somes)       |

## THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

|     |      |       |                                                                  |
|-----|------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| W/c | 28th | April | <i>Olympia Theatre, Dublin</i>                                   |
| "   | 5th  | May   | <i>Grand Opera House, Belfast (two weeks)</i>                    |
| "   | 19th | "     | <i>Grand Theatre, Blackpool</i>                                  |
| "   | 26th | "     | <i>Alhambra, Bradford</i>                                        |
| "   | 2nd  | June  | <i>Theatre Royal, Newcastle</i>                                  |
| "   | 9th  | "     | <i>Embassy Theatre, Peterborough</i>                             |
| "   | 23rd | "     | <i>Two weeks' season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden</i> |

## FESTIVAL BALLET FOREIGN TOUR

|                |       |                                                                                  |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17th-27th      | April | <i>Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris (Paris Festival)</i>                           |
| 29th April-5th | May   | <i>Theatre de l'Opera, Nice</i>                                                  |
| 9th-21st       | May   | <i>Teatro Nazionale de San Carlos, Lisbon</i>                                    |
| 24th-27th      | May   | <i>Teatro de l'Opera, Marseille</i>                                              |
| 2nd-14th       | June  | <i>Israel (celebration of the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel)</i>       |
| 17th-22nd      | June  | <i>The Staatstheater, Zurich (Zurich Festival)</i>                               |
| 24th-29th      | June  | <i>Deutsches Theater, Munich (800th Anniversary of the City of Munich)</i>       |
| 7th-8th        | July  | <i>Theatre Nationale de l'Opera, Paris (2 perfs. Nutcracker in its entirety)</i> |
| 11th-13th      | July  | <i>Nervi International Dance Festival at Genoa</i>                               |
| 16th July-13th | Sept. | <i>Festival Hall, London</i>                                                     |

## ASSOCIATION OF BALLET CLUBS

|      |      |                                                                         |
|------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10th | May. | Evening of Ballet, <i>Rudolph Steiner Theatre, London.</i><br>7.30 p.m. |
|------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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# LITTÉRATEURS OF BALLET

by P. M. KARP

THE names of Nikolai Volkov and Yuri Slonimsky are unfamiliar to the average person in the theatre audience. This is regrettable, since almost the entire history of Soviet ballet, in which they have taken an active part, is associated with their names.

Thirty-five years ago a hitherto unknown young man by the name of Yuri Slonimsky lectured on the subject of the ballet *Sylphide* at the Institute of Theatre and Music. Thirty years ago the theatrical critic Nikolai Volkov wrote his first article about ballet—a review of R. Gliere's new ballet *Red Poppy* at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre.

Since then many articles, reviews and books have appeared from the pen of the two authors. Volkov's papers were more often devoted to discussions of the new performances, whereas Slonimsky delved into the history of ballet art. His books on the ballet performances of *Sylphide* and *Giselle*, the voluminous monograph on *Masters of Ballet*, dealing with the stars of the St. Petersburg ballet, the recently published book on Tchaikovsky's ballets and many other of his articles and research papers have served as a cornerstone to the science of Soviet ballet dancing.

Slonimsky and Volkov also helped to build up the new Soviet ballet repertory in the capacity of dramaturgist-scenario writers.

The importance of the scenario writer in creating a ballet performance is poorly appreciated by some. The spectator is aware that the composer writes the music, the ballet master composes the dance scenes, the dancers dance them. But what does that man called the scenarist do in the ballet performance? Invent the plot, the intrigue? Yes, he often does that. But then, we know that most of our ballets are really stage adaptations of literary classic works or fairy-tales, the stories of which have long been familiar to us. How does the scenarist apply himself in these cases?

Very simply: he searches for adequate ways of translating the theme, content, idea of the given story into ballet form.

The scenarist must turn the plot in such a way as to bring the dances composed by the ballet-master into an integral conception of the dance as such—the language of imagery which comprises the essence of ballet art and demands from the artiste not only a knowledge of a number of *pas*, but a marked talent for ballet dancing.

The art of the scenario writer determines the success or failure of a performance to a far greater extent than many are inclined to think. Volkov and Slonimsky are the oldest and most experienced Soviet writers of today. It was with their direct participation that the way was paved for Soviet ballet, as a ballet seeking for close contact with literature. As scenarists they are to be credited too for shaping a large portion of the ballet repertoires of Leningrad's theatres. A number of their ballets have had a running on stages outside of Leningrad as well.

N. Volkov wrote the scenarios for V. Vainonen's direction of *The Flame of Paris* (together with V. Dmitriev), to B. Asafiev's music; *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* B. Asafiev's music, R. Zakharov's direction; *The Caucasian Prisoner* (together with L. Lavrovsky)—B. Asafiev's music, L. Lavrovsky's direction at the Maly Opera Theatre; *The Heart of the Hills* (together with G. Leonidze)—A. Balanchivadze's music, V. Chabukiani's direction; *Cinderella*—S. Prokofiev's music, K. Sergeyev's direction; *Spartacus*—A. Khachaturyan's music, L. Yakobson's direction at the Kirov Theatre, and *Blue Danube*—music by J. Strauss, B. Fenster's direction at the Maly Opera Theatre.

Y. Slonimsky wrote the scenarios for the ballets *Christmas Eve*, music by B. Asafiev, directed by V. Varkovitsky at the Leningrad



Nikolai Volkov—The Soviet Dramatist

Photo: Nikolaya Pamina

Choreographic School; *Tale of the Priest and his Worker Balda*—music by M. Chulaki, directed by V. Varkovitsky at the Maly Opera Theatre; *Seven Brothers*—music by A. Varlamov, directed by Y. Grigorovich at the Gorky Palace of Culture; *Spring Fairy Tale*—music by B. Asafiev after Tchaikovsky, directed by F. Lopukhov at the Kirov Theatre; *Seven Beauties* (together with S. Rakhman and I. Idayat-zade)—music by K. Karayev, directed by P. Gusev, at the Maly Opera Theatre.

At the present time the Kirov Theatre is working on the ballet *Path of Thunder* after Y. Slonimsky's scenario, to K. Karayev's music. The ballet is being directed by K. Sergeyev.

*Flame of Paris*, *Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, *Cinderella*, *Spartacus*, *Blue Danube*, *Youth* and *Seven Beauties* have enjoyed successful runs on many stages of the Soviet Union, and are still retained in their repertoires. The aforementioned lists alone speak eloquently of the role played in Soviet ballets by the scenario writer. We hope these lists will be supplemented with more and more new performances that will win the favour of ballet-lovers.

## IRISH BALLET'S OWN SAGA—continued from page 10

Telegraphs, Mr. P. J. Little, showed that official circles regarded this as no mere amateur effort, but a serious signpost to the future.

After this, Cork Ballet Week became an annual event. Miss Moriarty's studio, most conveniently situated opposite the Opera House, gave the whole set-up a character almost on a par with the State-subsidised continental Opera Ballets; only, of course, they were struggling along on a shoe-string.

Year followed year, and then in 1955 as a rehearsal was in progress, a dancer thought she saw sparks issuing from the roof of the Opera House opposite. The idea was pooh-poohed, and work went on; but a few minutes later, flames appeared, and the Moriarty students were the first to rush out and raise the alarm—their prompt action saved the lives of some stage workers who were quite unconscious of their danger. In a very short time the Opera House was burnt to the ground—a serious loss, which is still causing many a headache to public-minded Cork citizens.

Since its inauguration, the annual Cork Festival has relied upon the Ballet Week (now held in the City Hall) as one of its leading

attractions. Emphasis from the start has been on Irish Ballets, and every year until now Miss Moriarty has included at least one item based on national folk-lore, legend or character. The classics, of course, have not been forgotten, and with increasing technical efficiency, even abstract ballets have been attempted. Guest stars have been invited, to increase the box office appeal for Festival Week; but on its own tours to various provincial Irish cities the company relies upon its own strength, and several of its graduates have already moved on to a wider field, notably to the United States.

The first full-length ballet was *Coppelia*, in the presence of the President and Mrs. Kelly in 1955. With the production this year of the full-length *Sleeping Princess*, they reach the summit of their ambition in the classical line, having produced all the favourites, with the exception of *Sylphides*. Altogether 40 ballets have been presented, most of them original creations. The company has its own wardrobe, every stitch of which is made in the town. It has two set designers, Marsdall Hutson and Frank Sanquest, while the general management, and also the lighting effects are in the capable hands of Mr. S. L. Horne.





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## ROYAL BALLET STUDENT

By DAVID BENN

THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF  
ARTICLES IN WHICH THE READER  
IS TOLD THE TRUE STORY OF THE  
ROAD WHICH LIES AHEAD FOR  
THOSE WHO TAKE UP BALLET  
AS A CAREER

Your first class in make-up ends in chaos. You finish the class smothered with greasepaint, and so does everyone else. Remover cream soon restores *you* to normal, but what of your costume. This has to be spotless or else! "The ballet" said Mr. Haskell in the first article of this series "is like the Brigade of Guards." The inspection of costumes is another aspect of its similarity. This is done regularly and woe betide anyone who does not pass this close scrutiny.

A great deal of your time goes in washing, darning and pressing, and you think nostalgically of the days when you gave them to mother and came home from school to find them ready for you.

Your grant seems to get smaller and smaller and such things as soap coupons acquire tremendous importance. You had not realised what a staggering expense shoes could be. At home with two or three classes a week your shoes could be made to last a reasonable time before you gave your father that "flat-broke" look and wrote off for a new pair. Now your shoes are in almost constant use and breaking down with such rapidity that you begin to wonder if the teacher who inspects your shoes has any heart at all. And father is not there to foot the bill.

Mr. Haskell once described darning shoes as "an occupational disease". Now you begin to see why, because to darn a pair of shoes well takes two hours, and they need darning quite often.

At the end of each day you are ready for bed, yet you manage to fit in visits to Covent Garden. Before you left home you imagined watching the two Companies of the Royal Ballet night after night from the wings. No such luck. Even when you want to seek their autographs you join the general public, outside the stage door, like everyone else.

And of course these visits mean an extra meal out, which you cannot afford. You envy the boys at the school who often augment their grant by doing night work.

Yet gradually you begin to feel yourself part of a great organisation. In Paris or Moscow the school would be very accessible to the theatre, but in England the organisation came into being bit by bit, in such places as were available. As you grind away at your class you know that in the same building the stars of the Company are rehearsing.

It is beginning to dawn upon you that all the students in the school cannot possibly hope to break into the Company, and you begin also to become aware of an atmosphere of competition. You know that you are being constantly watched, and you know that at any moment that rigid surveillance may be brought to a head. At least once a year Dame Ninette de Valois comes in to witness a class. Everyone knows that on that one class may well depend their entire career. Older students will tell you of the nervous tension which mounts as that time approaches, and you remember the time which led up to your own audition.

Almost every week a notice goes up on the board—someone is wanted by one of the staff. Once in a while it is what every one dreams of—an offer of a place in the Company. If that happens you get a place in the corps de ballet on a salary a little more than half of what you would get in revue, and a continuation of the grind—and the competition.

What happens far more frequently is that you will be told you can stay, but you will not be guaranteed a place in the Company. You may quite well be told "we don't think you have it in you, and we suggest you take up something else".

Many a schoolgirl's dream has ended here, for only the most determined will stick it out after that. But some do. I went over to see Anita Landa, now one of Festival Ballet's leading ballerinas. She had a lot to say on the subject. "If it is in your blood" she told me "you will still go on. It's going to be hard work but if you really have it in you and are prepared to work, and I really mean *work*, you may still win through."

"After all the hard work you put in at the beginning surely it must be a heartbreaking experience," I said.

"Yes, it is," replied Anita, "you see I know, it happened to me nine years ago."

Parts One and Two are still available, price 1s. 6d. each part. Please add 4d. for postage.



# Young Dancers

## EVENING OF RUSSIAN BALLET

THE weather clerk always seems to frown on ballet activities. For the *Evening of Russian Ballet* on 8th March at Penge County Grammar School by Madame Zybina's School of Russian Ballet and the Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club there was a violent snowstorm. Nevertheless the show was well worth braving the elements to see.

Madame Zybina is a Founder Member of the Federation of Russian Ballet. During the entire period of the war she was in Yugoslavia where she continued, in spite of the occupation, to train a ballet company in her own house. After the liberation she was appointed Ballet Mistress to the State Theatre in Belgrade. In 1946 she came to England and opened a school in Beckenham, Kent. She has recently accepted the appointment of Ballet Mistress to the Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club.

*Pictures at an Exhibition* with which the show opened, was a visual interpretation by Madame Zybina of Moussorgsky's famous work. It certainly shows that here at least is one company of dancers who have been taught to rely on the music (even if it did come over on a badly scratched record) not only for timing but, for want of a better word, for inspiration. Mariangela Polich was a most realistic Mother Hen and in fact the ballet was spoilt only by two things. The first was the periodic explosion of photographic flashes, often at the most dramatic point. Surely the local press could have sent their photographer to the dress rehearsal. I have yet to meet a club who would not be delighted to arrange a "photo call." Secondly, isn't it time amateur groups realised that lighting has far more to it than the blending of a few colours and the rhythmic use of dimmers?

*Divertissements*, as its title suggests, presented a wide variety of themes, and the confidence with which these dancers tackled it belied their years. However, Mariangela Polich could have got far more out of, or perhaps put far more into, *The Fatal Cobweb* and Margaret Childs made far less heavy weather of Maria Balinska's *Variation*, had not both these dancers been quite so concerned to show us that what they were doing was demanding (a totally unnecessary exposé).

Madame Zybina's *Yugoslav Village Scene* was obviously the work of a distinguished authority. The dancers tackled it with a verve and energy which never became undisciplined (as it could so very easily have done). It speaks volumes for the personality of a teacher when she can enable such a youthful company to feel what she is trying to portray, when the aesthetics of it are basically foreign to them.

Let me make a suggestion to Madame Zybina. Why not present an entire show of Yugoslavia's National Dances? You have the dances at your finger tips and talented dancers at your disposal. If you do I'll be there.

*Ballet Suite* was a fitting conclusion to a balanced programme and an answer to the critics who claim that the young English dancer is unable to develop the qualities of lyricism. It is a pity that Madame Zybina has not greater sources of male talent at her disposal, for a ballet of this nature needs at least one male to complete the effect.

The main attraction for the critic of a show like this is the chance of spotting talent in the making. At this show I saw 14-year-old Delia Lindon of Beckenham. In a Croation dance she tackled the highly complicated beat with a confidence many older dancers would envy, and her all too brief appearance in *Ballet Suite* proved beyond doubt that this was no mere flash-in-the-pan. She has received her entire training from Madame Zybina. In September, however, she goes to the Rambert School. I sincerely hope we shall hear a lot more of this dancer in a few years.

DAVID BENN



Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club

Photo: Studio Cole

### MABEL RYAN AWARD

ON March 8th the Rudolf Steiner Hall saw the tests for the Senior Medal of the Mabel Ryan Award of the Cecchetti Society, adjudicated by Dame Ninette de Valois. As usual, there was a wide gap between the best and the worst of the entrants; one or two showed such severe faults of style and technique that it was hard to see how they had qualified for this competition by passing their Grade IV, whereas the dancing of the best competitors was so excellent that—as Dame Ninette said in her adjudication—the afternoon was an exciting one.

With admirable tact she announced the winner almost as soon as she stepped on the stage, thus sparing the contestants any agonies of suspense. As she said, there was little difficulty in picking out the winner and runner-up; these two girls (both pupils of Kathleen Yates) stood out quite clearly from their nearest rivals. The senior medal was won by Valerie Scott-Sanders, a tall girl of fourteen with a well-formed body and striking personality who looked much older than her years. Dame Ninette said, with justice, that this dancer fulfilled in the dance all the promising artistry that were to be noticed in her class work. (All the dancers were taken through a class before tackling the set dance).

Dame Ninette described the runner-up, Margaret Varcoe, as showing "great feeling and musicality. Certain faults need correction, but when she gets these right she will be excellent; a very interesting young dancer."

Dame Ninette praised the set dance arranged by Molly Lake as affording fine opportunities for judging the dancers. For my part I found its floor-patterns much too complicated; the dancers had to change direction every few seconds, and it was only by exercising remarkable musicality that the winners were able to make anything of the dance.

While awaiting Dame Ninette's adjudication we were given the opportunity of seeing in action the winner, runner-up and three "honourable mentions" of the junior section of the competition, adjudicated a month earlier by Olive Ripman. Here again there had been little difficulty in selecting the winner and runner-up; Ann Whitley and Amanda Knott, two pupils of Nesta Brooking, stood out clearly from their nearest rivals. Both these young dancers showed remarkable maturity, personality, sense of style and musicality. Amanda Knott (who also won the junior section of the Choreographic Competition) was by far the more assured of the two; I swear she would not bat an eyelid if asked to improvise a classical dance, at a Covent Garden gala, on the theme of the Bank-Rate Leak. Ann Whitley showed occasional faint signs of uneasiness, but she covered herself with glory at the junior competition when Olive Ripman asked the dancers to be given some steps to perform "at sight": Ann Whitley, in full view of the waiting audience, and quite on her own, built up the steps into a well-phrased and fully satisfying little dance.

FERNAU HALL.

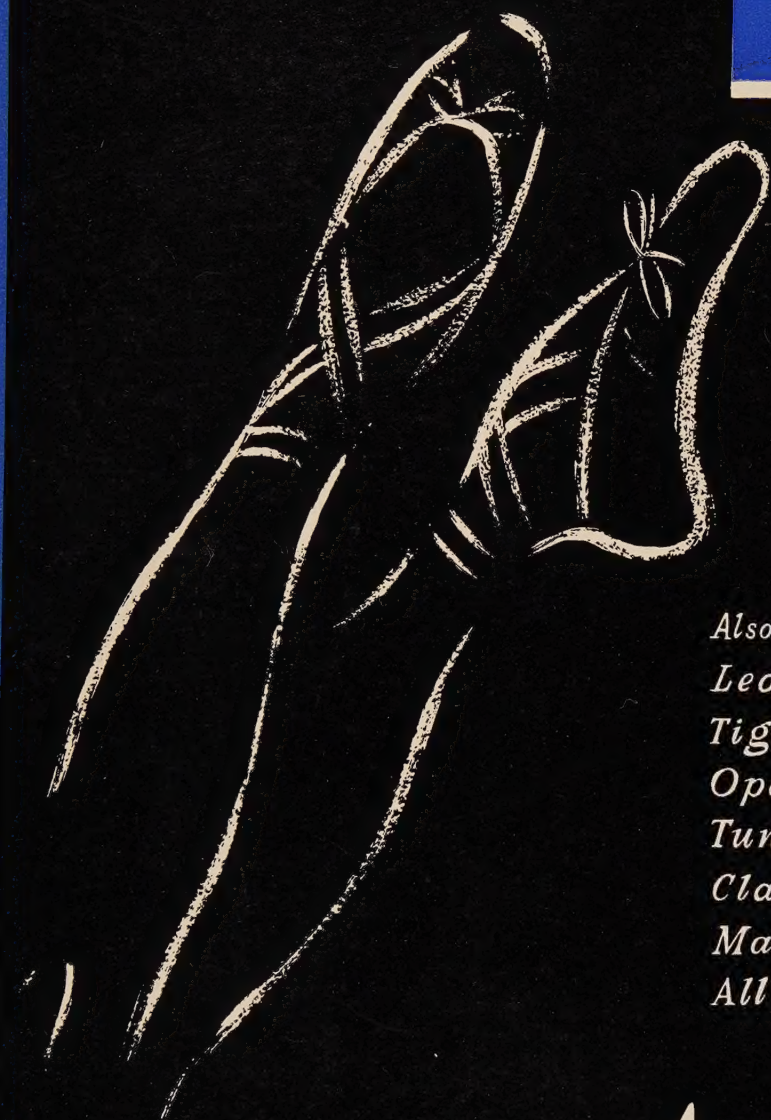
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